

Grammar

for

IELTS Writing Task 2

& for Life 

Improve your English Language

High Level Grammar in Simple Steps

Increase your IELTS Score

Volume I

Pages 1 - 101

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This book contains information about grammar as well as model sentences which can be paraphrased for use in IELTS writing task 2. The ideas expressed in the model sentences are not intended to influence any person's personal opinions and do not represent the opinions of the author.

Message from Liz



Improve your grammar by building awareness and accuracy.

Your grammar score in an IELTS essay is as much about strategy as about knowledge.

Play to your strengths and avoid errors.

Hi guys,

I just want to have a quick chat before you become too immersed in English grammar.

Success in the marking criterion of grammar comes from gaining awareness of what aspects of grammar you can use in your essay to showcase your skills and avoid errors. I hope this e-book will help you take a very firm step towards increasing your score in one of the most challenging of the four marking criteria. I am sure this e-book will help you open your eyes to all the English grammar features you already know, but forget to demonstrate to the examiner, and to much more that you need to pay attention to for a high score. With both knowledge and awareness comes real confidence. With such confidence comes success.

I have tried to ensure that this e-book goes beyond just a standard grammar book. I have tried to make sure that it answers your concerns and questions about what grammar is all about in an IELTS essay. I hope you will see more clearly what you need to do to increase your score after you have completed this e-book.

However, I also hope that this e-book will be more than just your friend during your IELTS preparation. I hope it will be your constant companion as you strive to improve your English in the years to come as you build a successful future for yourself.

I wish you the very best of luck in your exam and in all your future endeavours.

All the best,

Liz

One step taken with awareness, clarity of mind and clear purpose is more effective than ten steps taken in confusion, doubt and lack of focus.

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Note

Chapters marked with 🔍 are for people who have less than one month before their test. These chapters are the most critical to review if you are short of time.

Chapters marked with *** are for people who have finished IELTS and wish to focus exclusively on English language development. It might still be useful to review all chapters, but I have marked those which will be most helpful to you.

How to Use this E-book

This e-book is suitable for people wishing to improve their English language through higher level grammar and for those wishing to increase their IELTS Writing Task 2 score.

E-book Aims

1. The aim of this e-book is to take your English grammar to a higher level. Your development of English should not stop with IELTS. This e-book is also for people who have finished their IELTS test and wish to continue learning.
2. This e-book also aims to help you increase your IELTS Writing Task 2 score by helping you learn more about grammar for IELTS and what the examiner is looking for. The target for this e-book is band score 7 and above.

You need to learn not only a range of tenses and sentence structures but also other grammar features such as noun clauses and noun phrases. This is essential for better English and for IELTS because the examiner will pay equal attention to all grammar features you use in your essay. One aspect of grammar does not have more value than another.

As errors in IELTS Writing Task 2 grammar will lower your score, this e-book also contains an essential list of errors to avoid. Never go beyond your own personal capacity. Know your own strengths and weaknesses. The Workbook will help you test your development of English grammar. Most chapters have corresponding exercises which you can complete in the Workbook. At the back of the Workbook, you will find three model essays with mistakes in for you to spot. These final exercises will help you with proofreading skills as well as test your development.

Do not memorise entire sentences to put in your IELTS essays. Use the example sentences to learn tenses and sentence structures in order to make your own sentences. The sentences you use in your essay should be created by you, not memorised from books.

Once you have developed your range and cultivated accuracy, you will need to apply these appropriately and correctly in your IELTS essay. To do this, do not aim to impress. Instead aim for clear, precise meaning and accurate sentences. Make sure you spend plenty of time planning your essay so that when you start writing, you can focus on vocabulary and grammar.

More Than One Month Before Your Test

If you have one month or more before your test date, you can take your time to work through this e-book. Work through each chapter in turn. On completion of a chapter, turn

to the relevant page in the Workbook to complete exercises to test your understanding and accuracy. If you have struggled with the exercises, return to the chapter and review it again.

One Month or Less Before Your Test

If you have less than one month before your test date, you might want to focus on specific aspects of English grammar to quickly build range and accuracy.

In the Contents Pages, I have marked the chapters which will benefit you most with this sign: 🔍. In the Workbook, the most important exercises are the Spot the Mistakes Exercises which are three model essays with common errors to find.

Using This E-book for English Grammar, not IELTS

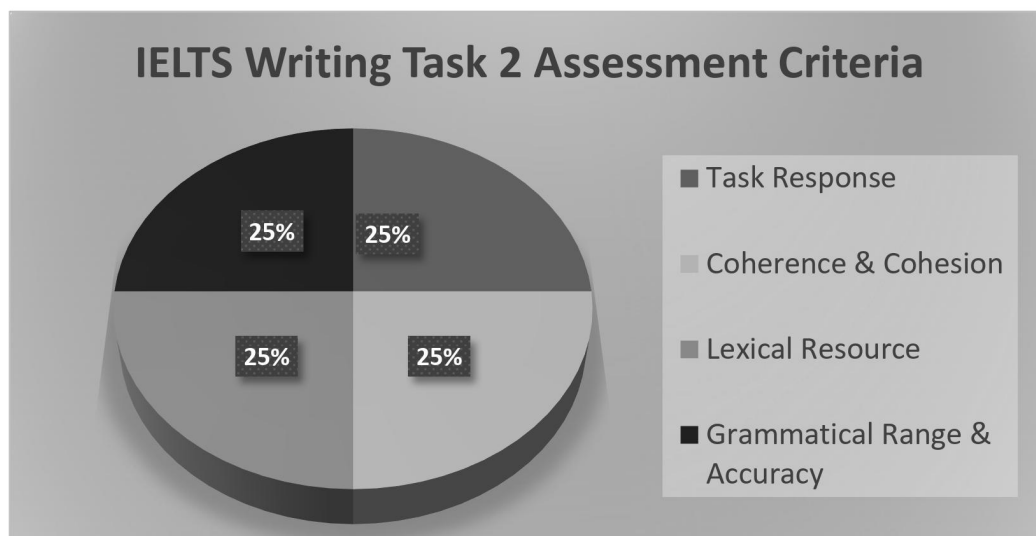
This e-book mainly focuses on the development of English language through grammar. Of course, there are chapters for IELTS Writing Task 2, but most chapters are for the improvement of English grammar. If you look at the Contents Pages, I have marked the chapters most useful to you with ***. Of course, you will still learn a lot from the other chapters, but those I have highlighted will be most beneficial to you.

IELTS Speaking Grammar Tips

Even though this e-book mainly focuses on IELTS Writing Task 2, all the grammar rules for English which are taught in this e-book apply to IELTS Speaking as well. As with Writing Task 2, grammar counts for 25% of your Speaking score. However, IELTS Speaking is informal which means some of the restrictions for Writing Task 2 do not apply. For example, the use of pronouns is wide and varied in IELTS Speaking. You can and should use contractions (it is = it's) for IELTS Speaking because it is an essential pronunciation feature to demonstrate to the examiner. When you practice at home, record your answers. Then write down word for word what you have said and refer to this e-book to check your accuracy. Mistakes in grammar will lower your IELTS Speaking score.

You need to show a range of English grammar in your IELTS Speaking Test. Practice adding different tenses, clauses and other features found in this e-book to your answers at home. This should be part of your training prior to your Speaking test. However, in the test itself, your main focus needs to be on fluency and extending your answers. By the time of your test, grammar range and accuracy should come more naturally to you from your extensive practice at home. Try to avoid self-correction as this lowers your Fluency score.

IELTS Writing Task 2 Grammar Band Scores



As you can see from the chart above, the examiner will mark your essay based on four marking criteria. Each criterion is worth 25% of your marks. There is no difference at all between the criteria for Academic IELTS writing and General Training IELTS writing. Below are simplistic descriptions of the four marking criteria shown above in the pie chart.

Task Response relates to your answer and ideas connected to the issue or issues presented in the essay question.

Coherence and Cohesion relates to how you link your ideas, how you organise your ideas, how you use paragraphs and your use of referencing.

Lexical Resource is all about the range and accuracy of your vocabulary, including spelling.

Grammatical Range and Accuracy is about the range of the grammar you use, which is far more than just tenses, and the accuracy of your grammar, including punctuation.

Grammar is the area that many people struggle with. They struggle with achieving accuracy and are confused about what “range” means. This e-book will help you develop more accuracy to reduce errors and will help you understand all the range of grammar features you can use in your essay.

Your aim should always be to reduce your errors by making your grammar more accurate and to increase your awareness of grammar so that you can show a better range.

The examiner will check the **range** and **accuracy** of your English grammar. This means:

- the range of tenses, sentence structures, noun phrases and other grammar features
- how accurate your grammar is (how many mistakes you make, including punctuation)

IELTS Grammar Band Score Table

Below is a table which summarises how the examiner will grade your Writing Task 2 grammar.

Grammar Band Scores	IELTS Public Descriptors	Summary
Band 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a limited range of structures • Attempts complex sentences but these are less accurate than simple sentences • May make frequent grammatical errors and punctuation might be faulty • Errors can cause some difficulty for the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not much variety in sentences • Simple sentences are more accurate • Complex sentences are less accurate • Frequent errors • Meaning of sentences is unclear at times
Band 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a mix of simple and complex sentences • May make some errors in grammar and punctuation • Errors rarely cause difficulty for the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all sentences are complex • Some sentences are simple • Some errors • Meaning of sentences is clear
Band 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a variety of complex sentences • Frequent error-free sentences • Good control of grammar and punctuation • Makes few errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of complex sentence structures • Few errors
Band 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a wide range of structures • The majority of sentences are error-free • Makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide range of structures • Occasional errors • Most sentences are free of errors
Band 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy • Rare minor errors occur only as 'slips' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible use of structures • Accidental small errors

You can see that more errors will lower your score. Use this e-book to reduce those errors.

The examiner will not count each individual error. There is no particular number of errors relating to any band score. The examiner will assess the overall density of errors (the general frequency) and whether those errors impede communication. You should aim for clarity and making your ideas clear as a first step. Do not just aim to impress.

From the descriptions, it can be seen that simple sentence structures are common in the lower band scores and a variety of complex sentence structures is a feature of the higher band scores. However, do not overstretch yourself. **Always use the grammar features and structures that you feel you can produce accurately.** Use this e-book to help you safely expand that range.

IELTS Liz

Length of Sentences

It is a very common mistake to think that a complex sentence needs to be long. This is not the case at all in IELTS. In fact, very long sentences often illustrate poor punctuation. A sentence that contains a clause would be considered complex because it has a clause, not because it is long.

Below you will see the difference between a sentence that is too long and would lower your score in Writing Task 2 and sentences that are controlled in length.

Poor control of sentence length:

Many children struggle with weight problems, such as obesity, because they do not take enough exercise and as they have a poor diet, which is mainly caused by the abundance of fast food on offer, they are unable to burn off the calories and fat, and thus gain weight.

This is just one VERY long sentence. Many students think this shows complex English. However, it only shows a lack of punctuation and a lack of awareness of the criterion of grammar for IELTS Writing Task 2. The examiner will look for both a range of sentence structures and good punctuation. So, in IELTS, the length needs to be controlled.

Now look below at how it should have been written.

Good control of length:

Many children struggle with weight problems, such as obesity, because they do not take enough exercise. Another reason for this problem is a poor diet, which is mainly caused by the abundance of fast food on offer. The accumulated effect is that children do not burn off excess calories and fat, and this leads to serious weight gain.

The paragraph contains the same information, but it is written as three sentences. The sentences are linked together appropriately: "Another reason for this problem ..." / "The accumulated effect is ...". Each sentence in this paragraph is considered a complex sentence. Signposting and linking are marked in IELTS Writing Task 2 under the marking criterion of Coherence and Cohesion. Using three sentences also shows the examiner that you are able to control punctuation and know when to use a full stop. A complex sentence does not need to be very long. A complex sentence might have just 15 words in it. There is no particular length to aim for, but just be aware of creating sentences that are too long and contain too many clauses.

What are Complex Sentences in IELTS Writing Task 2?

Understanding Simple and Complex Sentences in IELTS

In IELTS Writing Task 2, the examiner will take note of whether you are using simple or complex sentences. Below are examples of the different stages of complexity of sentences.

Simple	Doctors must sometimes work late at night.
Compound	Doctors must sometimes work late at night, but the hours can put a strain on their health.
Complex	Although being a doctor is considered a good job, doctors must sometimes work late at night.
Compound-complex	Doctors must sometimes work late at night, but the hours can put a strain on their health even though the job is considered a good one.

As you can see above, a compound sentence is when you join two sentences together using a conjunction, such as *and* or *but*. When you create a compound sentence by joining two sentences, it is no longer considered a simple structure in IELTS. In other words, a compound sentence would be considered a complex sentence in IELTS Writing Task 2 purely because it is not simple.

This means a compound sentence, a complex sentence and a compound-complex sentence are all considered complex by IELTS standards because they are not simple in structure. In IELTS, a complex sentence does not need to be complicated.

In the examples above, the compound sentence is connected using the linking word *but*. This is just as acceptable and valuable as a complex sentence using the linking word *though*, as shown in the third sentence. You should aim to use a range of compound and complex sentences if you are aiming for band 7 or above. For those aiming for bands 8 and 9, using compound-complex sentences will certainly help.

Complex Grammar FAQs

Do all my sentences need to be complex?

It depends on your level of English and your band score target. Your aim should be to avoid errors, rather than trying to impress. The more errors you have, the lower your score.

If your grammar is not strong, you should mostly use a combination of simple and compound sentence structures. However, if your grammar is strong, aim for a good range of compound, complex and compound-complex structures. For the higher-level candidates, avoid using simple sentence structures. To understand more about how errors will impact your score, see the band score information on page 4.

Do my sentences need to be long?

No. A complex sentence does not need to be very long. In IELTS, a very long sentence is often viewed as an example of poor punctuation. This is explained on page 6.

IELTS Liz

From Simple to Complex

Simple Sentences

In the box below, you will see a paragraph written by a hypothetical IELTS test taker who has not been trained in IELTS techniques or complex structures.

Many people travel to work by car. They travel by car because it is quick and convenient. Many cars can cause air pollution. The number of cars should be limited in city centres. Limiting car use will reduce air pollution. People should use public transport. Public transport needs to be improved. Better public transport will encourage people to use it.

The paragraph above is made up of mostly simple sentences. You can see that the paragraph is basically a list of simple sentences put in one paragraph. Here you can see them listed in order:

- Many people travel to work by car.
- They travel by car because it is quick and convenient.
- Many cars can cause air pollution.
- The number of cars should be limited in city centres.
- Limiting car use will reduce air pollution.
- People should use public transport.
- Public transport needs to be improved.
- Better public transport will encourage people to use it.

What are the problems with this?

1. Most sentences above are simple in formation and quite short.
2. There is a lot of repetition (words are repeated often).
3. The ideas are not connected. They are similar to a list of ideas written one after the other rather than being a cohesive paragraph.

How will the examiner view this paragraph?

The sentences do provide ideas which are relevant, which means they fulfil, although not well, the marking criterion of Task Response, which is 25% of your marks.

However, how is this paragraph viewed by the examiner based on the other marking criteria: Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Response (i.e. vocabulary) and Grammatical Range and Accuracy (i.e. grammar)?

- The examiner will notice the lack of linking words and this will adversely affect your score for Coherence and Cohesion, which is 25% of your marks.
- The examiner will notice a large number of repeated words. There is also a limited range of vocabulary for this topic. Both problems will reduce your score for vocabulary, which is 25% of your marks.
- The examiner will notice a lot of simple structures and no complex structures. This will lower your score for grammar, which is 25% of your marks.

How can this be improved?

Answer:

- Connect sentences with linking words.
- Reference using *it, this, they*, etc.
- Put more information in the sentences to achieve better in Task Response.
- Make the sentences more complex.
- Deploy a better range of vocabulary.

Complex Sentences

Now let's write this paragraph again using the right techniques: linking, referencing and clauses.

Below you can see the three paragraphs for comparison:

1. Simple Sentences: Unconnected sentences with repetitive vocabulary

Many people travel to work by car. They travel by car because it is quick and convenient. Cars cause air pollution. The number of cars should be limited in city centres. Limiting car use will reduce air pollution. People should use public transportation. Public transport needs to be improved. Better and cheaper public transport will encourage people to use it.

2. Simple and Complex: Connected sentences but only adequate range of vocabulary

Many people travel to work by car because it is quick and convenient. Cars cause air pollution so the number should be limited in city centres. By doing this, air pollution can be reduced. Furthermore, public transport needs to be improved to encourage people to use that mode of transport rather than private cars. This can be done by offering cheaper and better public transport.

3. Complex Sentences: Fully connected with a flexible range of vocabulary

Many people commute to work by car simply because it is a quick and convenient way to travel. As cars pollute the air with carbon emissions, it is advisable that the number of vehicles should be limited, particularly in city centres. By reducing harmful emissions, air pollution will most definitely return to safer levels which will be less dangerous for people's health. Furthermore, as a step to reducing the use of private vehicles, the government ought to encourage the use of public transport by offering the public a cheaper and more reliable public transportation system.

Development of Sentences

A) Two unconnected sentences become one:

Many people travel to work by car. They travel by car because it is quick and convenient.

- Many people travel to work by car because it is quick and convenient.

Then we just add some interesting vocabulary:

- Many people commute to work by car simply because it is a quick and convenient way to travel.

B) Three unconnected sentences become two connected sentences:

Cars cause air pollution. The number of cars should be limited in city centres.
Limiting car use will reduce air pollution.

- Cars cause air pollution so the number should be limited in city centres. By doing this, air pollution can be reduced.
- As cars pollute the air with carbon emissions, it is advisable that the number of vehicles should be limited, particularly in city centres. By reducing harmful emissions, air pollution will most definitely return to safer levels which will be less dangerous for people's health.

You can also see that the third option contains more information and details, which means more interesting vocabulary and a better score for Task Response.

C) Three sentences become two and then one:

People should use public transport. Public transport needs to be improved. Better and cheaper public transport will encourage people to use it.

- Furthermore, public transport needs to be improved to encourage people to use that mode of transport rather than private cars. This can be done by offering cheaper and better public transport.
- Furthermore, as a step to reducing the use of private vehicles, the government ought to encourage the use of public transport by offering the public a cheaper and more reliable public transportation system.

More Examples of Simple to Complex

Below are three more examples of how paragraphs can be developed from simple to complex. When you analyse the development of the paragraphs below, pay particular attention to:

1. sentence length
2. sentence complexity with grammar features and clauses
3. topic sentences (the first sentence of a body paragraph)
4. referencing and absence of repetition
5. signposting – making supporting points stand out for the reader
6. connecting ideas rather than listing them
7. developed, well explained ideas
8. relevant examples and details
9. absence of over-generalisation (being more specific and more precise)
10. vocabulary.

Your paragraph development is not only about grammar, it must include more thought-out ideas with more detail, linking words and richer, topic-related vocabulary.

The benefits of mobile phones

Mobile phones are good for people. People can use mobile phones in all places. This is a good thing for people and communication. It is also good for emergencies. Mobile phones are quick to use. For example, if I send a text to my friends, they can reply in one minute. Smartphones have internet access. People can go online and do banking or shopping with a mobile phone. (68 words)

There can be no doubt that mobile phones are extremely useful. One advantage is that mobile phones can be used wherever a person is. This is useful for better communication and in case of emergencies. Another benefit is that mobile phones offer quick communication. This allows people to communicate with each other by text or calling in just one minute no matter where they are. The last plus point is that smartphones allow people to access the internet to do their online banking or shopping, which is very convenient. (89 words)

Mobile phones have indeed changed the way we communicate and live. One obvious advantage is that people are now able to be geographically mobile while calling or texting, which is clearly beneficial in many cases such as emergencies. Furthermore, being able to communicate with just a click has revolutionised the way business is conducted around the world and has opened up a new era of instant communication. Another benefit is the multiple functions of a smartphone which enable people to multitask with the convenience of using only one device. For example, users are now able to do online banking or shopping as well as profit from other features such as apps and cameras. (113 words)

Development of sentences:

Mobile phones are good for people.

- There can be no doubt that mobile phones are extremely useful.
- Mobile phones have indeed changed the way we communicate and live.

People can use mobile phones in all places. This is a good thing for people and communication. It is also good for emergencies.

- One advantage is that mobile phones can be used wherever a person is. This is useful for better communication and in case of emergencies.
- One obvious advantage is that people are now able to be geographically mobile while calling or texting, which is clearly beneficial in many cases such as emergencies.

Mobile phones are quick to use. For example, if I send a text to my friends, they can reply in one minute.

- Another benefit is that mobile phones offer quick communication. This allows people to communicate with each other by text or calling in just one minute no matter where they are.
- Furthermore, being able to communicate with just a click has revolutionised the way business is conducted around the world and has opened up a new era of instant communication.

Smartphones have internet access. People can go online and do banking or shopping with a mobile phone.

- The last plus point is that smartphones allow people to access the internet to do their online banking or shopping, which is very convenient.
- Another benefit is the multiple functions of a smartphone which enable people to multitask with the convenience of using only one device. For example, users are now able to do online banking or shopping as well as profit from other features such as apps and cameras.

People should have equal access to education, work and healthcare

Humans should all have the same rights. People should be able to go to school. People should be allowed to work for money. People should be able to see a doctor. But some countries do not have all those things. For example, in many countries the economy is very bad. The result is that many people can never find a job. Rich countries should help poor countries. This is the best way to fix the problem. (76 words)

All people are born equal and they should have the same rights. All people around the world should have access to education, to work and to healthcare. However, not all countries can guarantee access to such things. For example, in many countries the economy is so bad that many people are unemployed, and do not have secondary education or good healthcare. The best solution is that rich countries support the poorer countries. If rich countries do not help, the situation will not change. (83 words)

As all people are born equal, we should all have the same rights and opportunities regardless of nationality. No matter where a person is born, they should have access to good education, paid employment and an efficient healthcare system. However, unfortunately, this is not feasible for many countries, particularly those with a developing economy. For such countries, the lack of financial means has resulted in limited access to education and healthcare as well as high unemployment rates. Consequently, the most effective solution is for richer countries to provide essential aid, both financial and practical, to countries that are desperate for economic relief. Without such support, it is unlikely that poor countries will ever be able to offer the same opportunities to their citizens as their wealthier counterparts do. (128 words)

Development of sentences:

Humans should all have the same rights.

- All people are born equal and they should have the same rights.
- As all people are born equal, we should all have the same rights and opportunities regardless of nationality.

People should be able to go to school. People should be allowed to work for money.

People should be able to see a doctor.

- All people around the world should have access to education, to work and to healthcare.
- No matter where a person is born, they should have access to good education, paid employment and an efficient healthcare system.

But some countries do not have all those things. For example, in many countries the economy is very bad. The result is that many people can never find a job.

- However, not all countries can guarantee access to such things. For example, in many countries the economy is so bad that many people are unemployed, and do not have secondary education or good healthcare.
- However, unfortunately, this is not feasible for many countries, particularly those with a developing economy. For such countries, the lack of financial means has resulted in limited access to education and healthcare as well as high unemployment rates.

Rich countries should help poor countries. This is the best way to fix the problem.

- The best solution is that rich countries support the poorer countries. If rich countries do not help, the situation will not change.
- Consequently, the most effective solution is for richer countries to provide essential aid, both financial and practical, to countries that are desperate for economic relief. Without such support, it is unlikely that poor countries will be able to offer the same opportunities to their citizens as their wealthier counterparts do.

The reasons for global mass tourism

Mass tourism is growing these days. Mass tourism is growing because people have more free time than before. People have more money to spend. Many companies sell holidays with everything included. It is easy for people because they do not need to organise anything themselves. Flying is easier and less expensive than before. Mass tourism makes people happy. Good weather is enjoyable. People can also discover culture and history. (69 words)

There are a number of reasons behind the growth of mass tourism. One reason for the growth in mass tourism is that people have more free time and more money to spend than ever before. Another reason is that many travel agents offer holidays where everything is included and planned for the customer. Alternatively, for people who wish to travel independently, there are now cheap flights to many popular destinations. Lastly, mass tourism allows people to enjoy a better climate, and discover new cultures and rich history. (87 words)

The unprecedented growth in worldwide mass tourism can be explained by a number of reasons. One major factor contributing to this growth is that more people than ever before now enjoy more free time as well as more disposable income enabling them to travel abroad. Another explanation is that many travel agents offer affordable, all-inclusive package holidays which relieve holidaymakers of the burden of booking flights and hotels themselves. Alternatively, more independent-minded holidaymakers have the choice of turning to low-cost carriers and availing themselves of a wide range of no-frills flights to popular destinations. Lastly, mass tourism allows people to cheaply and conveniently experience a better climate while also discovering new cultures and exploring places of natural or historical interest. (120 words)

Development of sentences:

Mass tourism is growing these days.

- There are a number of reasons behind the growth of mass tourism.
- The unprecedented growth in worldwide mass tourism can be explained by a number of reasons.

Mass tourism is growing because people have more free time than before. People have more money to spend.

- One reason for the growth in mass tourism is that people have more free time and more money to spend than ever before.
- One major factor contributing to this growth is that more people than ever before now enjoy more free time as well as more disposable income enabling them to travel abroad.

Many companies sell holidays with everything included. It is easy for people because they do not need to organise anything themselves.

- Another reason is that many travel agents offer holidays where everything is included and planned for the customer.
- Another explanation is that many travel agents offer affordable, all-inclusive package holidays which relieve holidaymakers of the burden of booking flights and hotels themselves.

Flying is easier and less expensive than before.

- Alternatively, for people who wish to travel independently, there are now cheap flights to many popular destinations.
- Alternatively, more independent-minded holidaymakers have the choice of turning to low-cost carriers and availing themselves of a wide range of no-frills flights to popular destinations.

Mass tourism makes people happy. Good weather is enjoyable. People can also discover culture and history.

- Lastly, mass tourism allows people to enjoy a better climate, and discover new cultures and rich history.
- Lastly, mass tourism allows people to cheaply and conveniently experience a better climate while also discovering new cultures and exploring places of natural or historical interest.

Tips

One way you can improve this aspect of your writing is in the planning stage. Most people plan ideas similar to the level of what is written in the first paragraph of each of the three models above. If you do not think more deeply about your ideas and supporting points, you will end up writing in a basic manner, even if your English is strong. Take the time to think about the particulars of your ideas. Plan the details. Plan as much as you can before you start writing.

So, to summarise:

1. Brainstorm ideas that are relevant to the topic.
2. Select which ideas are best to use.
3. Think about supporting points that explain your main idea.
4. Think of examples and more details so you can present developed supporting points. Try to avoid over-generalisation and be more specific.
5. Think about extra information you can add to boost your vocabulary score. However, always use topic-related vocabulary.
6. Think about how you will link ideas together (*because / as / by doing this / so / furthermore / lastly*, etc.).
7. Think about referencing (*this / it / they*, etc.). This will reduce repeated words.

8. Think about clauses and the range of sentence structures available.
9. Limit the length of sentences to provide accurate examples of various sentence structures. You can see that the length of each sentence is controlled and NOT TOO LONG. Always aim for accuracy rather than to impress. Know your limits.

My example paragraphs above show how you can take simple ideas and develop them by adding well thought-out, specific detail. If you struggle with ideas for topics, please get the ***Ideas for IELTS Essay Topics E-book*** from IELTS Liz, which contains ideas and vocabulary for over 150 common essay topics.

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Noun Phrases & Gerund Phrases

Noun Phrases

Noun phrases are one of the most common types of phrases used in English and a grammar feature that is good to showcase in your IELTS essay.

The examiner will notice if you use noun phrases and will also notice the complexity of the noun phrase. It is certainly worth paying close attention to the noun phrases you use and practising creating them accurately.

Types of Noun Phrases

Simple Noun Phrase: A noun phrase might consist of only a main noun with an article or an article with an adjective.

a small town

a	small	Town
Determiner	Adjective	Main Noun

Note: The word “determiner” denotes a group of words that includes: articles (*a, an, the*); demonstratives (e.g. *this, that*, etc.); possessives (e.g. *my, your*, etc.); numbers (e.g. *one, two*, etc.). Quantifiers (e.g. *some, any, much, more, few*, etc.) are often included in this category.

Complex Noun Phrase: A noun phrase might consist of a number of words surrounding a main noun.

a small town with a healthy tourist trade

a	small	town	with	A	healthy	tourist	trade
Determiner	Adjective	Main Noun	Preposition	Determiner	Adj.	Noun	Noun

For IELTS Writing Task 2, if you are aiming for a higher band score, you need to look at using more complex noun phrases. The complexity of the noun phrase will depend on your level of English. Remember your aim should always be to avoid errors.

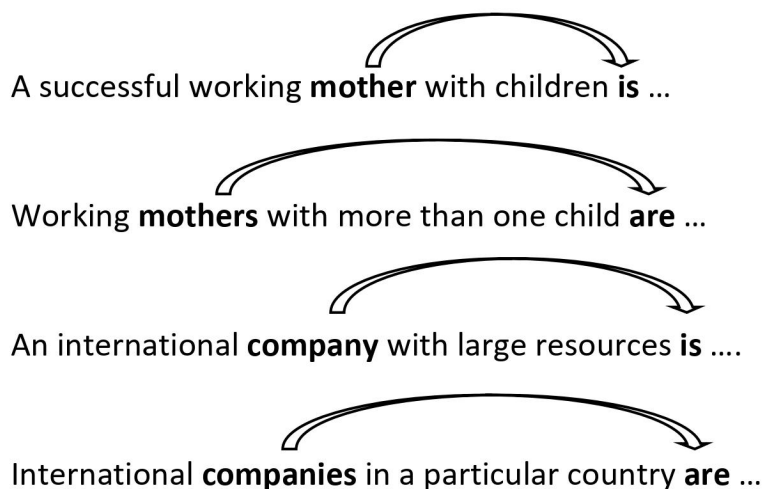
Creating Complex Noun Phrases

A noun phrase is made up of a collection of words that go before and/or after a main noun. Those words modify the meaning of the main noun. Below you can see examples of:

- pre-modification (words going before the main noun)
- post-modification (words going after the main noun).

	Noun Phrase
Pre-modification:	a successful working mother
Post-modification:	companies with large resources
Pre- and post-modification:	a successful working mother with children
Pre- and post-modification:	international companies with large resources

When you use a noun phrase, it is essential to think about the verb form that comes after it. To make sure you get the correct Noun + Verb agreement, you need to identify the main noun in the noun phrase. Below I have highlighted this for you.



Unless you correctly identify the main noun in the noun phrase, you are in danger of using the wrong verb form. This is one of the most common grammar mistakes that people make in their IELTS Writing Task 2 essay.

Modifying Words

Let's take a look at typical modifying words that can be used in noun phrases.

After each example, "(sg.)" means that you need to use a singular verb form after the noun phrase, whereas "(pl.)" means that you need a plural verb form.

Pre-modification usually consists of one or more of these words: determiners, quantifiers, adjectives, participles, other nouns. Let's now look at some examples of pre-modification with each of those words.

Determiners

an international sports competition (sg.)

the importance of culture (sg.)

your future (sg.)

those skills (pl.)

Quantifiers

a significant number of people (pl.)

a high volume of traffic (sg.)

a range of skills (pl.)

a lot of businesses (pl.)

not all companies (pl.)

most employers (pl.)

very few students (pl.)

For more information about quantifiers, go to page 170.

Adjectives

a charismatic, dynamic person (*sg.*)

reliable people (*pl.*)

a large, medical research facility (*sg.*)

Participles

Adjectives created from verbs are called “participles”.

There are two types of such adjectives. Type 1 = Verb + *-ing*. Type 2 = Verb + *-ed* if the verb is regular (otherwise the third form of the verb is used).

Examples:

publish → a publishing company / a published author

exhaust → an exhausting job / exhausted nurses

break → breaking news / broken promises

write → a writing desk / a written report

As you can see, the underlined words in each of these four examples have a very different meaning, and the ending does not show tense in any way.

boring films (*pl.*)

a bored teenager (*sg.*)

a frightening experience (*sg.*)

a frightened child (*sg.*)

Nouns

time management (*sg.*)

a state school (*sg.*)

the riot police (*pl.*)

a children's author (*sg.*)

Two or more nouns can modify the main noun. For example:

healthcare worker safety (*sg.*)

air traffic controller jobs (*pl.*)

language skills development theories (*pl.*)

Nouns coordinated with *and*

- Traditional cultures and lifestyles are in danger of disappearing.

In this sentence, as both subject nouns are plural, there is no doubt that the verb must also be plural.

- China and India are fast-growing economies.

Here, both nouns are singular, but the verb must be plural because China and India are separate 'entities' or 'units'. This sentence means: 'China is a fast-growing economy' + 'India is a fast-growing economy' ⇒ 'China and India are fast-growing economies.'

The following example can be explained in the same way:

- Sugar and salt are in everything we eat.

This sentence means: 'Sugar is in everything we eat' + 'Salt is in everything we eat' ⇒ 'Sugar and salt are in everything we eat.'

In this sentence, however, things differ:

- Too much sugar and salt is unhealthy.

As *much* is singular, the verb must be singular as well. This sentence could be paraphrased as 'Eating too much sugar and salt is unhealthy.'

There are, however, variations in usage due to the writer's (or speaker's) point of view:

- Not enough exercise and too much junk food are the main causes of obesity.

In this case, the writer views lack of exercise and excess of junk food as separate 'units' or 'entities', and the verb is therefore plural.

In the following sentence, the point of view is different:

- Not enough exercise and too much junk food is bad for you.

Here, a singular verb is used because doing too little exercise and eating too much junk food is seen by the writer as a single entity causing health problems.

Post-modifiers come after the main noun in the noun phrase. They usually consist of one or more of the following: prepositional phrases, relative clauses, non-finite clauses (i.e. clauses which contain a verb that does not show a particular tense).

Prepositional phrases

a person with a big social media presence (sg.)

countries with large financial resources (pl.)

libraries with good online resources (pl.)

people with good computer skills (pl.)

films with an unnecessary amount of violence (pl.)

countries without enough resources (pl.)

people on a low income (pl.)

schools in rural areas (pl.)

people at a certain stage of life (pl.)

visitors from abroad (pl.)

Relative clauses

a person who speaks two languages (sg.)

a company that offers housing to employees (sg.)

people who speak more than one language (pl.)

a company that hires local staff (sg.)

For more information about relative clauses, go to page 70.

Non-finite clauses

people working long hours (pl.)

jobs involving many responsibilities (pl.)

sports centres offering free lessons (pl.)

companies employing many staff (pl.)

a restaurant offering vegetarian meals (sg.)

a person employed by an international company (sg.)

countries geared towards the tourist industry (pl.)

children given an unhealthy diet (pl.)

books written by women for women (pl.)

Examples of Noun Phrases in Sentences

A noun phrase can make up the subject or object of a sentence. Their length can vary, as shown below:

- People with a big income are obviously successful in life.
- Traditional cultures and lifestyles should be preserved as much as possible.
- The range of a person's work experience can be more important than qualifications.
- Companies that pay no attention to recycling and waste disposal should be held accountable.
- Many people do not understand the importance of recycling plastics.
- New laws will help tackle companies that do not follow recycling procedures.
- Parents feeding their children junk food are not thinking about the health impact that it can have.
- Companies giving their employees staff uniforms encourage equality.
- We should admire countries that take care of vulnerable members of society.

Gerund (Noun) Phrases

Gerunds are verbs that have become nouns by adding *-ing*.

For example, *begin* → *beginning*

In the section above about Noun Phrases, we learned that we create an adjective when we have Verb + *-ing*. However, in this section we will learn that gerunds too are formed using Verb + *-ing*, but have a different function in the sentence. They do not function as adjectives modifying the noun, they function as the main noun itself.

Below are two sentences which will help you understand the difference between an Adjective (Verb + *-ing*) and a Gerund/Noun (Verb + *-ing*).

Adjective (*working*)

- Working mothers should have support.

Adjective	Working
Main Noun	Mothers
Auxiliary Verb	Should
Verb	Have
Object	support.

In the phrase *working mothers*, *working* is clearly an adjective, just like *single* and *adoptive* in *single mothers* and *adoptive mothers*, for example.

Gerund (*working*)

- Working should be a human right.

Main Noun	Working
Auxiliary Verb	Should
Verb	Be
Object	a human right.

As you can see above, the second sentence illustrates the use of a gerund. The gerund (Verb+ *-ing*) is the main noun in the sentence.

In this sentence, instead of *working*, we could have other nouns such as *privacy*, or *healthcare* or *access to clean water*.

Using gerunds is a feature of English grammar that is good to show the examiner if possible. You could use a gerund as a single noun or as part of a gerund noun phrase.

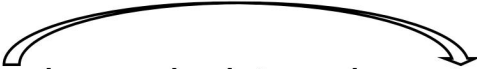
Using Gerund Noun Phrases

A gerund noun phrase or gerund phrase is always singular. This is one of the most important things to learn about using gerunds and gerund noun phrases.

A common mistake when using gerund phrases is to misidentify the subject, which results in using the incorrect verb form. The sentence below illustrates this common mistake. The verb should be singular.

- ✗ Having better schools in rural areas are one way to bridge the gap between quality of life in the countryside and in cities.
- ✓ Having better schools in rural areas is one way to bridge the gap between quality of life in the countryside and in cities.

Below I have highlighted the subject of the verb when using a gerund phrase.


Having better schools in rural areas is one way to bridge the gap between quality of life in the countryside and in cities.

The sentence above correctly shows that the gerund phrase is the subject of the verb. The word “areas” is not the subject of the verb, it is part of the gerund noun phrase. Such mistakes are very common when using gerund phrases. Always pay attention to this in your essay.

Gerund phrases function in the same way as noun phrases. So, just like noun phrases, they can be used as subject or object in a sentence.

The examiner will notice if you use gerund phrases. Therefore, it is a good idea to practise starting one of your sentences with a gerund, like in these example sentences:

- Improving hotels and services is one way that a country can boost its tourist trade.
- Earning a high salary should depend on a person’s contribution to society.

Of course, you can also practise using a gerund phrase as object:

- More and more people enjoy working from home.
- When you stay in the same job for a long time, you start doing things mechanically.

Further Examples of Gerund Noun Phrases

As mentioned earlier, gerund phrases can be simple in structure or more complex, and they can be either the subject or the object of the main verb. Below you can see a wide variety of gerund phrases and how they can be used to form a sentence.

1. Simple Gerund Phrases as Subject

Subject Gerund Phrase	Verb	Complement
Educating people Supporting the poor Helping the people	should be	a requirement in all societies.
		Object
Reading books Understanding different cultures Supporting the environment	creates	an open-minded person.
		Complement
Being open-minded	makes	a person impartial.
Being hardworking	is	a step towards success.
Being free	should be	a basic human right.

2. Complex Gerund Phrases as Subject

Subject Gerund Phrase	Verb	Complement
Showing elderly people respect Giving disabled people social benefits Providing both support and care to disabled people Ensuring students have a job after graduating	is	a must.

Becoming independent and able to make your own decisions	Is	part of personal growth.
Being able to adapt and cope with change	Is	important in life.
Downloading music and films without payment	is called	piracy.
		Object
Protecting the environment and appreciating the importance of the natural world	creates	an open-minded person.
Reading books and keeping abreast of news		
Understanding different cultures and tolerating differences		

As you can see, the gerund phrase as subject is always followed by a verb in the singular.

3. Simple Gerund Phrases as Object of a Verb or Preposition, or as Complement

Subject	Verb	Object Gerund Phrase
A lot of teenagers	Enjoy	chatting online.
People who have children	Resent	working long hours.
Many young graduates	are contemplating	going abroad.
	V + Preposition	
School-leavers	worry about	finding a suitable job.
Too few teachers	feel like	working in rural areas.
	Verb	Complement Gerund Phrase
Teenagers' favourite hobby	seems to have become	surfing the internet.
The greatest global challenge	is	eradicating poverty.

4. Complex Gerund Phrases as Object of a Verb or Preposition, or as Complement

Subject	Verb	Object Gerund Phrase
Children	would not mind	being punished if they were made to understand what they did wrong.
Teachers	should avoid	giving young children too much homework.
It would be irresponsible to	postpone	dealing with the problems created by lack of gun control.
	V + Preposition	
Many drivers	do not approve of	using a mobile phone when driving.
All parents	look forward to	teaching their babies to talk and walk.
Few people	succeed in	landing the job they were dreaming of.
	Verb	Complement Gerund Phrase
One of life's greatest joys	is	sharing a meal with people you love.
Our main priority	should be	dealing with the environmental issues for which we are responsible.

For more information about gerunds, see Verb Patterns, page 136, and Use of Prepositions, page 204.

See Workbook Exercises page 1.

Noun Clauses

Noun clauses (sometimes called 'nominal clauses') are quite often used in IELTS Writing Task 2 essays and are well worth learning about.

This chapter contains the follow sections:

1.	What is a Noun Clause?
2.	Creating a Noun Clause
3.	Functions of Noun Clauses in the Sentence

1. What is a Noun Clause?

Noun clauses are dependent clauses and cannot stand alone. This means they are part of a sentence and cannot be a sentence on their own. They usually begin with certain specific words. Below is a list of the most common words to start a noun clause.

Noun clause words

- how
- how long
- how much / how many
- how often
- that
- the fact that
- what
- whatever
- when
- where
- whether
- which
- whichever
- who
- whoever
- why

2. Creating a Noun Clause

A noun clause usually starts with one of the words given in the list above. This chapter will look at three ways to create a noun clause.

- A. Noun Clause: Word + Noun + Verb + Rest of clause
- B. Noun Clause: Word + Noun + *to*-infinitive + Rest of clause
- C. Noun Clause: Word + *to*-infinitive + Rest of clause
- D. Noun clauses with *whoever/whatever*

A) Noun Clause: Word + Noun + Verb + Rest of clause

A noun clause begins with a noun clause word as shown in the list above. It can then be followed by a noun (or a pronoun), a verb and the rest of the noun clause. Let's look at a sentence which contains a noun clause using this formation:

- How much money is invested in schools depends on various factors.

In the sentence above, the noun clause is:

How much money is invested in schools

The formation of this noun clause is illustrated below.

How much	Noun Clause Word
Money	Noun (subject of noun clause)
is invested	Verb (Present Simple, passive voice)
in schools	Rest of noun clause

As you can see, the noun clause word is at the beginning, followed by a noun, then a verb and finally the rest of the information in the clause.

Let's look at other examples of a noun clause and how they are formed:

- Whether people eat a balanced diet will affect their health.

In this sentence, the noun clause is *Whether people eat a balanced diet* and this is formed as shown below:

Whether	Noun Clause Word
People	Noun (subject of noun clause)
Eat	Verb (Present Simple)
a balanced diet	Rest of noun clause

- Environmentalists agree that governments should put climate change at the top of their agenda.

In this sentence, the noun clause is *that governments should put climate change at the top of their agenda*.

That	Noun Clause Word
Governments	Noun (subject of noun clause)
should put	Verb
climate change at the top of their agenda.	Rest of noun clause

It is also possible to create more complex noun clauses using a connector such as *or/and*.

- Whether people play sport or do exercise will impact their health.
- How often people do exercise, eat well and unwind can affect their mental well-being.

Subject–verb agreement within a noun clause

So far we have looked at how the noun clause affects the verb in the sentence. The noun clause is the subject of the verb in the sentence.

However, within the noun clause itself, we must also check the subject in the noun clause and the verb in the noun clause to make sure they are in agreement. In other words, the verb within the noun clause must agree with the subject of the noun clause.

Let's refer back to the first example to review subject–verb agreement. The sentence we looked at was:

- How much money is invested in schools depends on various factors.

As you remember, the noun clause in this sentence is: *How much money is invested in schools*

Within the noun clause, you will see a subject and a verb. The subject of the noun clause given above is *how much money*. The verb of the noun clause above is *is*.

Money is an uncountable noun. As you know, uncountable nouns are always third person singular, which means that the verb in the noun clause must agree with third person singular:


How much money **is** invested in schools depends on various factors.

Let's look at another example of this:

- How much traffic flows through city centres affects the quality of air.

In the sentence above, the noun clause is *How much traffic flows through city centres*.

You can see that the subject of the noun clause is *How much traffic*. The word *traffic* is an uncountable noun and therefore third person singular. As a result, the verb in the noun clause must agree with this. With a regular verb in the Present Simple, the third person singular requires an -s. See below:


How much traffic **flows** through city centres

As you can see, the verb *flows* ends with an -s to agree with the third person singular in the Present Simple.

However, if the subject in the noun clause contains a plural noun, the verb in the noun clause must agree with it. Let's look at an example:

- How many people visit museums each day is important to consider.

The noun clause in the sentence above is *How many people visit museums each day*.

Let's look at the subject–verb agreement within the noun clause:

How many people  **visit** museums each day

As you can see, the verb *visit* does not end in an -s because the noun is third person plural. The verb *visit* agrees with the plural noun *people*.

Let's look briefly at more illustrations of subject–verb agreement within a noun clause:

- Whether a person is rich or poor will determine how much they spend on holidays.

In the sentence above, there are two noun clauses.

The first noun clause (*Whether a person is rich or poor*) contains:

- a singular noun (*a person*)
- Present Simple verb in third person singular (*is*)

The second noun clause (*how much they spend on holidays*) contains:

- a plural pronoun (*they*)
- Present Simple verb in third person plural (*spend*)

To learn more about singular and plural personal pronouns, go to Pronouns and Referencing page 163.

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Below is one last example of a noun clause illustrating subject–verb agreement:

- How many new employees are hired each year depends on various factors.

The noun clause is underlined in the sentence above, and below you will see the subject–verb agreement highlighted within the noun clause:

How many new employees  **are** hired each year

The noun *employees* is plural and therefore the third person plural verb is required. The passive voice third person plural uses *are* from the verb *to be* (*are hired*).

The subject of a noun clause

As seen in many of the sentences above, the noun following the noun clause word is often an ordinary noun (either countable or uncountable):

- money
- traffic
- people
- employees

However, it is also common that the word following the noun clause word is a pronoun or a noun phrase. See examples of both below.

Pronoun:

- How much we spend on space exploration should depend on the wealth of each country.

How much	Noun Clause Word
We	Pronoun (subject of noun clause)
Spend	Verb
on space exploration	Rest of noun clause

Noun phrase:

- People have different opinions about whether having university education is beneficial or not.

Whether	Noun Clause Word
having a university education	Noun Phrase (subject of noun clause)
Is	Verb
beneficial or not	Rest of noun clause

B) Noun Clause: Word + Noun + *to*-infinitive + Rest of clause

- How much money to invest in the healthcare system is often disagreed on.

In the sentence above, the noun clause is *How much money to invest in the healthcare system*.

How much	Noun Clause Word
Money	Noun
to invest	<i>to</i> -infinitive
in the healthcare system	Rest of clause

Let's look at other noun clauses formed in a similar way:

- How many people to allow into a museum at one time must be regulated.
- Whichever candidate to hire must be agreed on unanimously.
- How much effort to put into one's job is an individual preference.
- Which product to purchase usually depends on both the quality and the price.

This structure of noun clause is mainly, but not only, used with the following noun clause words:

- How many/much
- Whichever
- Which
- What

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C) Noun Clause: Word + Verb (*to*-infinitive) + Rest of clause

Using this way of forming a noun clause, the noun clause still starts with a noun clause word. However, it is then followed by a *to*-infinitive and then the rest of the clause. Let's look at an example:

- How much to invest in space exploration is something people do not always agree on.

How much	Noun Clause Word
to invest	<i>to</i> -infinitive
in space exploration	Rest of clause

Note: It is possible to add the noun *money* to the above noun phrase as well: *How much money to invest in space exploration*. However, not all noun clauses created using Noun Clause Word + *to*-infinitive can be altered in the same way.

Creating noun clauses using Noun Clause Word + *to*-infinitive is most common using the following noun clause words:

- How
- How often
- How long
- How much / how many
- Whether
- What
- Who
- Where
- When

Let's look at more examples of noun clauses using this structure:

- How to improve a country's economy is important to assess before providing aid.
- Whether to donate money or provide food and shelter is a difficult decision to make when helping the homeless.
- How long to stay in one job might be determined by the promotional prospects within the company.
- Where to build new housing must be decided carefully.
- When to take up a hobby can sometimes depend on a person's time in life.

D) Noun Clauses with *whoever/whatever*

Noun clauses starting with *whoever/whatever* can have two different patterns:

i	<i>whoever/whatever</i> + Noun (or Pronoun) + Verb + Rest of the clause (see Section A above)
ii	<i>whoever/whatever</i> + Verb + Rest of the clause

Let's now look at examples of these two patterns in detail.

i. ***whoever/whatever* + Noun (or Pronoun) + Verb + Rest of the clause (see Section A above)**

- Whatever education people have in childhood affects the rest of their lives.

Whatever	Noun Clause Word
education	Noun (object of the verb <i>have</i>)
people	Noun (subject of the verb <i>have</i>)
have	Verb
in childhood	Rest of clause

The whole noun clause (*Whatever education people have in childhood*) is the subject of the main verb (*affects*).

- Whatever solution the government decides must reflect the will of the people.

Whatever	Noun Clause Word
solution	Noun (object of the verb <i>decides</i>)
the government	Noun (subject of the verb <i>decides</i>)
decides	Verb

The whole noun clause (*Whatever solution the government decides*) is the subject of the verb (*must reflect*).

ii. ***whoever/whatever* + Verb + Rest of the clause**

- (1) Companies should hire whoever has the most experience and qualifications.
- (2) We can decide whatever happens next.

In these two examples, you can see that the noun clause word is followed immediately by a verb (*has/happens*). It is not followed by a noun, pronoun or noun phrase. This is because the meaning of *whoever* and *whatever* already 'includes' a noun:

whoever = 'the person who', 'anyone who'

whatever = 'the thing that', 'anything that'

In Sentence (1), *whoever* is the subject of *has*. The whole noun clause (*whoever has the most experience and qualifications*) is the object of *should hire*.

In Sentence (2), *whatever* is the subject of *happens*. The whole noun clause (*Whatever happens next*) is the object of *decide*.

The pattern *whoever/whatever* + Verb is also found when the noun clause is the subject of the sentence:

- Whoever has the most experience and qualifications stands the best chance of being hired.
- Whatever happens next is our decision.

Further examples:

- Whoever wins the space race will have total control over the Earth.
- Whoever spreads false information through the internet should be prosecuted.
- Teachers are always happy to train whoever wants to learn and to work hard.
- Whatever stimulates people to discover new cultures is a good thing.
- Social networking websites tend to promote whatever encourages people to spend money.

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3. Functions of Noun Clauses in the Sentence

In a sentence, a noun clause very often functions as subject or object. However, as is explained below, it can also perform other functions.

Noun Clauses as Subject in a Sentence

A noun clause can act as the subject in a sentence. Below is an example of this:

- How much money is invested in schools **depends** on various factors.

How much money is invested in schools	Subject (noun clause)
depends	Verb
on	Preposition
various factors	Object

In the above example, the whole noun clause (*How much money is invested in schools*) is the subject of the verb *depends*.

Within the sentence, a noun clause performs the function of an ordinary noun or noun phrase:

- Investment **depends** on various factors.
Investment is an ordinary noun which is the subject of the verb *depends*.
- The amount of investment in housing **depends** on various factors.
The amount of investment in housing is a noun phrase which is the subject of the verb *depends*.

The sentence could also be paraphrased using a noun clause created using both methods previously explained at the start of the chapter:

- How much investment is allocated to housing **depends** on various factors.
How much investment is allocated to housing is a noun clause which is the subject of the verb *depends*.
- How much to invest in housing **depends** on various factors.
How much to invest in housing is a noun clause which is the subject of the verb *depends*.

Subject–verb agreement within the sentence

It is important to note that a noun clause as the subject in a sentence is usually singular, so the verb in the main clause is third person singular (*depends*).

Below are more examples:

- Why so many people use social networking websites **is** relatively easy to explain.
- The fact that global tourism is increasing **is** a good sign for the future.
- Whoever cares for abandoned or abused children **deserves** our admiration.
- Whether people take a car or a bus to work **is** not the issue.
- Why some people still deny climate change **is** a growing concern.

To highlight again, please note that the noun clause is singular.

Whether people take a car or a bus to work **is** not the issue.

Whether a person takes a car or a bus to work **is** not the issue.

Even though the noun in the noun clause is plural (*people*), the whole noun clause in the sentence is singular and therefore the verb in the Present Simple is the third person singular (*to be = is*).

Let's see two more examples of this. In the sentences below, the noun clause and the singular verb form are highlighted:

Whether rich countries support poor countries **is** dependent on their own domestic issues.

Why people argue about climate change **is** beyond understanding.

Noun Clauses as Object

A noun clause can also be placed as the object to the verb in the sentence:

- I **believe** that diplomacy can solve all problems between countries.

I	Subject
believe	Verb
that diplomacy can solve all problems between countries.	Object (noun clause)

As seen in the sentence above, the whole noun clause functions as the **object** of the verb in the main clause (*believe*).

Note that the conjunction *that* can be omitted before a direct object noun clause:

- I believe diplomacy can solve all problems between countries.

Below are more examples of noun clauses as objects to the verb in the sentence. The verb has been highlighted for you.

- It is important **to consider** why people enjoy travelling to foreign countries.
- Many people still **do not understand** how important exercise is.
- We do not really **know** how much will be left of the primeval forests in ten years' time.
- We should not **ignore** what animals can teach us.

Noun Clauses as Subject Complement

A noun clause functions as subject complement if it follows a linking verb (usually *be*, sometimes *become*). In this case, the noun clause completes or describes the subject of the main clause:

- The problem **is** that many people are not recycling.
- The question **is** why we keep living the way we do if it damages the environment.
- I refuse to believe that truth **is** whatever we think is true.
- Some philosophers say that we **become** what we are.

Noun Clauses as Complement of an Adjective

Sometimes, a noun clause can be used to complete the meaning of an adjective or adjective phrase:

- Many people are **not sure** how much to donate to charities.
- Scientists are **uncertain** why the placebo effect is so powerful.
- People are **afraid** that another financial crisis might arise.
- Young graduates are often **worried** they might not find a job that matches their qualifications.

Noun clauses as Complement of a Preposition

Finally, a noun clause can also be used to complete the meaning of a preposition or prepositional phrase:

- A good teacher listens **to** what students have to say.
- It is high time governments focused their mind **on** how to eradicate poverty.
- We cannot spend our life waiting **for** whoever might be able to solve our problems.
- Sometimes, it can be very useful to stop and think **about** why we do what we do.

See Workbook Exercises page 4.

Linking Words & Sentence Structures

Complex sentences do not need to be complicated. Always make sure you are in control of your grammar structures and that you demonstrate a good range of grammar structures and features. The table below shows the different types of sentence structures that are common to use in IELTS Writing Task 2, divided into sections within this chapter.

1.	Time Clauses	<i>when / before / after / as soon as / while / since / until</i>
2.	Place Clauses	<i>Where</i>
3.	People Clauses	<i>who / whose – see page 70</i>
4.	Expressing Contrast	<i>although / even though / despite / in spite of / nevertheless, / however, / on the other hand, / but / while / whereas / by contrast,</i>
5.	Expressing Reason	<i>the reason (for / why) / which is why / as / since / because / because of / owing to / due to</i>
6.	Expressing Result	<i>so, / as a result, / as a consequence, / consequently, / therefore, / hence, / thus, / for this reason,</i>
7.	Expressing Purpose	<i>to / in order to / so as to / so that</i>
8.	Conditional Statements	See page 113
9.	Adding Information	<i>not only ... but also / and / in addition, / moreover, / furthermore, / besides, / as well as / also</i>
10.	Showing Similarities & Differences	<i>similarly / likewise / instead, / on the contrary, / in contrast, / rather</i>
11.	Adding Emphasis	<i>indeed / in fact</i>
12.	Complex Prepositions	<i>with regard to / with respect to / regarding / concerning / in terms of ...</i>
13.	Giving Examples	See page 229

Important:

- The table above is a list of possible sentence structures that can be used in IELTS Writing Task 2. Although this is a very detailed list, it is in no way comprehensive. It is just a thorough checklist to provide you with flexibility in choosing your sentence structures for IELTS Writing Task 2 essays. This will serve as a reminder of how many possible structures there are and as a guide to producing them more accurately.
- Do NOT memorise sentences from this chapter. Your sentences must be created by yourself in your IELTS test.
- As regards linking words (also known as “linkers”, “connectors” or “cohesive devices”), remember that knowing their meaning and using them accurately is only the first step. It is equally important to use them *appropriately*. Using linking words in the wrong places will detract from your score, as will under- or over-using them.
- You should also refer to the chapter on Relative Clauses for more details on clauses and use of commas in defining and non-defining clauses.

1. Time Clauses

Using a time clause is a useful way to vary your sentences and show the examiner more flexibility.

A time clause usually starts with one of these words:

when / before / after / as soon as / while / since / until

A “*when* clause” can be used at the start of a sentence or in the middle. It is a good idea to show the examiner that you can offer both options:

- When tourists visit historical buildings, they should be careful not to cause any damage.



Tourists should be careful not to cause damage when they visit historical buildings.

- Before going to university, many students prefer to take a gap year to travel or work.



Many students prefer to take a gap year to travel or work before going to university.

- After World War II, many buildings had to be rebuilt.



Many buildings had to be rebuilt after World War II.

- As soon as the government invests more money in infrastructure, the economy will start to develop.



The economy will start to develop as soon as the government invests more money in infrastructure.

- While so many children are dying from hunger, money is being wasted on space research programmes.



Money is being wasted on space research programmes while so many children are dying from hunger.

- Since a ban on smoking in public places was imposed, there has been a reduction in the incidence of heart attacks.



There has been a reduction in the incidence of heart attacks since a ban on smoking in public places was imposed.

- Until all governments agree to sign an international nuclear-test-ban treaty, we will all live under threat of an atomic war.



We will all live under threat of an atomic war until all governments agree to sign an international nuclear-test-ban treaty.

Important:

Note that a comma is only used if the time clause starts the sentence.

2. Place Clauses

Place clauses use the word **where**.

- We live in troubled times, and we never know where the next conflict will erupt.
- Understandably, people prefer to live where the air is clean.

A *where* clause can also be used at the start of a sentence:

- Where hatred exists, there will never be peace.

3. People Clauses

It is common to use **who** or **whose** clauses in an IELTS essay.

- People who dedicate their lives to saving others should be respected by society.
- Teachers whose job it is to educate young children must be good communicators.

For information about these clauses, see Relative Clauses, page 70.

4. Expressing Contrast

*although / even though / despite / in spite of / nevertheless, / however, /
on the other hand, / but / while / whereas / by contrast,*

Consider these two statements:

1. A good academic qualification is an asset when applying for a job.
2. Employers often value experience over education.

The first statement makes the second one seem surprising or unexpected. The second sentence offers a contrast to the first sentence. They are not necessarily opposites, but they are contrasts.

You might link these two statements using *but*:

A good academic qualification is an asset when applying for a job, but employers often value experience over education.

In formal essay writing, there is a whole range of other words that are used in preference to *but*.

Here are a few ways to link these two statements and express contrast:

- Although a good academic qualification is an asset when applying for a job, employers often value experience over education.



Despite the fact that a good academic qualification is an asset when applying for a job, employers often value experience over education.



A good academic qualification is an asset when applying for a job. Nevertheless, employers often value experience over education.

Let's now look in more detail at the underlined words and other similar 'linkers'.

although / even though; despite / in spite of

These two pairs of linking words have a similar meaning (*even though* is just a little stronger than *although*).

However, they require different types of structure: after *although / even though* we use a subject + a verb, while after *despite / in spite of* we use a noun, a pronoun or a gerund.

This is one way of demonstrating the skill of varying sentence structures to the examiner.

Important:

Never use the word *of* after *despite*!

- Although the death rate is declining in many countries, we still need better medicines and better treatment options.



Even though the death rate is declining in many countries, we still need better medicines and better treatment options.



Despite the decline in the death rate in many countries, we still need better medicines and better treatment options.



In spite of the decline in the death rate in many countries, we still need better medicines and better treatment options.

Reminder:

Once again, it is important to notice that the two pairs of sentences above are similar in meaning, but that *although / even though* require a different structure from *despite / in spite of*.

Incorrect: ~~Despite leadership skills are learned and can be taught~~, some individuals seem to be naturally predisposed to become leaders.

Correct: Despite the fact that leadership skills are learned and can be taught, some individuals seem to be naturally predisposed to become leaders.

or

Although leadership skills are learned and can be taught, some individuals seem to be naturally predisposed to become leaders.

Incorrect: ~~Although all its advantages~~, online learning cannot compete with the traditional classroom in terms of personal interaction and learner support.

Correct: In spite of all its advantages, online learning cannot compete with the traditional classroom in terms of personal interaction and learner support.

or

Even though it has many advantages, online learning cannot compete with the traditional classroom in terms of personal interaction and learner support.

or

Although online learning has many advantages, it cannot compete with the traditional classroom in terms of personal interaction and learner support.

For variety, you can change the order of the clauses:

- Although many people are aware of pollution, more still needs to be done to protect the environment.

⇓

More still needs to be done to protect the environment even though many people are aware of pollution.

⇓

Despite many people being aware of pollution, more still needs to be done to protect the environment.



More still needs to be done to protect the environment in spite of many people being aware of pollution.

Important:

When the sentence begins with *Although / Even though / Despite / In spite of*, there is always a comma at the end of the subordinate clause.

We now look at other useful words expressing contrast but which require different structures from *although/despite*.

nevertheless

This is used to replace “despite that being said”. This is a nice way to replace the linking word *although* and also show different sentence structures.

Note that *nevertheless* most frequently comes at the beginning of a sentence, where it is always followed by a comma.

- Uniforms can sometimes be unpopular with staff, who prefer to choose their own image. Nevertheless, companies find the benefits of uniforms essential in promoting their company.
 - Meaning = Although staff do not like uniforms, companies find them beneficial.
- Homework is time-consuming and not always enjoyed by children. Nevertheless, teachers continue to set homework because they know school hours are not enough for academic success.
 - Meaning = Although homework is time-consuming and not enjoyable, teachers continue to set homework because they know school hours are not enough for academic success.

however

This word means the same as *nevertheless*.

It is most frequently used either at the beginning of a sentence, followed by a comma, or in the middle of a sentence with a comma before and after it.

- Children should definitely learn art at school so that they can develop creativity and learn to express themselves through their work. However, this should not be done to the detriment of other subjects.



Children should definitely learn art at school so that they can develop creativity and learn to express themselves through their work. This, however, should not be done to the detriment of other subjects.



Children should definitely learn art at school so that they can develop creativity and learn to express themselves through their work. Nevertheless, this should not be done to the detriment of other subjects.

on the other hand

This expression too is used to express contrast with something that has just been said.

It is used either at the beginning of a sentence, followed by a comma, or in the middle of a sentence with a comma before and after it. This can also be replaced with *By contrast*.

- If all people spoke the same language, there would be complete understanding worldwide and trade would flourish between countries. On the other hand, having only one global language presents a number of difficulties.



If all people spoke the same language, there would be complete understanding worldwide and trade would flourish between countries. Having only one global language, on the other hand, presents a number of difficulties.



If all people spoke the same language, there would be complete understanding worldwide and trade would flourish between countries. Nevertheless, having only one global language presents a number of difficulties.

but

It is all right to use *but* as a linking word in an IELTS essay. However, it should NEVER be used at the start of a sentence in IELTS Writing Task 2.

Incorrect: Many young people enjoy socialising through social media. But they are often exposed to situations that can be potentially dangerous.

Correct: Many young people enjoy socialising through social media. However, they are often exposed to situations that can be potentially dangerous.

⇒ At the start of a sentence, the word *But* should be replaced with *However*.

while / whereas

These connectors can be used when *comparing* two facts and highlighting the difference between them. They are used to *contrast* one clause with another in the same sentence.

- Some people believe that emigration only causes suffering to individuals and families, while others argue that it is often the only way to escape extreme poverty.

↓

While some people argue that emigration is often the only way to escape extreme poverty, others believe that it only causes suffering to individuals and families.

- Before the advent of the internet, people would frequently go out to meet friends, whereas today they prefer to stay at home alone, chatting online.

↓

Whereas before the advent of the internet, people would frequently go out to meet friends, today they prefer to stay at home alone, chatting online.

5. Expressing Reason

It is common to be asked to present causes in an IELTS essay. This can be done using different structures to provide variety and showcase your grammar skills.

***the reason (for ... / why ...) / which is why... / as / since /
because / because of / owing to / due to***

the reason (for ... / why ...)

- The reason why many students take a gap year before university is that it gives them a chance to experience more of the world.



The reason many students take a gap year before university is that it gives them a chance to experience more of the world.

- Being able to gain work experience is the reason many students choose to take a gap year.



Being able to gain work experience is the reason for many students choosing to take a gap year.

..., *which is why* ...

This is a useful sentence structure to explain the reason for something. Please note the use of the comma.

- Many people fail to recycle their plastic, which is why the government should offer an incentive to encourage people.
- Natural beauty spots are a tourist attraction, which is why more funding should be allocated to protect them.

IELTS Liz

as / since

These words can be used simply to explain the reason for something.

As and *since* can be used either at the beginning or inside the sentence.

- As the gap between rich and poor continues to widen, there is a danger of civil unrest.



There is a danger of civil unrest as the gap between rich and poor continues to widen.

- Since traffic congestion causes so many problems, it would seem a good idea to encourage people to use public transport.



It would seem a good idea to encourage people to use public transport since traffic congestion causes so many problems.

because

The word *because* should NEVER be used at the start of a sentence in IELTS Writing Task 2.

Incorrect: Because schools are the primary source of knowledge for children, the curriculum should include traditional life skills.

Correct: As schools are the primary source of knowledge for children, the curriculum should include traditional life skills.



Since schools are the primary source of knowledge for children, the curriculum should include traditional life skills.

⇒ At the start of a sentence, the word *Because* should be replaced with *As* or *Since*.

Warning:

Do not confuse *because* with *because of*.

The word *because* is a conjunction and introduces a clause. It is followed by Subject + Verb.

The expression *because of* is a complex preposition and is therefore followed by a noun or a noun phrase.

Compare these two sentences:

- Many species are at risk of extinction because the climate is changing.
- Many species are at risk of extinction because of climate change.

Both '~~Many species are at risk of extinction because of the climate is changing.~~' and '~~Many species are at risk of extinction because climate change.~~' are WRONG.

owing to / due to

In formal essay writing, however, it is usually better to use *due to* or *owing to* rather than *because of*.

Note that *due to* and *owing to* can come at the start or in the middle of a sentence.

- Owing to a better standard of living, many people now enjoy a longer lifespan.



Many people now enjoy a longer lifespan owing to a better standard of living.

- Due to the lack of opportunities in rural areas, many young people move to the city.



Many young people move to the city due to the lack of opportunities in rural areas.

6. Expressing Result

In speaking and in informal writing, it is alright to use the word *so* to express the result of something that has just been mentioned: 'Public transport is crowded and unreliable, so a lot of people go to work by car.' In an IELTS essay, however, it is recommended to use slightly more formal alternatives.

*so, / as a result, / as a consequence, / consequently, / therefore, /
hence, / thus, / for this reason,*

so

- Nobody seems to be able to live without plastic, so we all to some extent contribute to marine pollution.
- All human beings have a heart and so cannot bear to see a child suffer.

as a result

This is often used at the beginning of a separate sentence, or inside the sentence preceded by *and*.

- Public transport is crowded and unreliable. As a result, many people go to work by car.



Public transport is crowded and unreliable, and as a result many people go to work by car.

as a consequence / consequently

These two linkers are slightly more formal than *as a result*, but they are used in exactly the same way.

- Inmates who are released after serving their sentence often face social exclusion and unemployment. As a consequence, they often turn to crime again.



Inmates who are released after serving their sentence often face social exclusion and unemployment, and as a consequence they often turn to crime again.

- Young adolescents are usually too immature to make serious decisions about their future. Consequently, they can only benefit from learning a broad range of subjects at school.



Young adolescents are usually too immature to make serious decisions about their future, and consequently they can only benefit from learning a broad range of subjects at school.

therefore

This word too can be used in a variety of positions.

- A great number of artists still live in relative poverty. Therefore, they should be funded by governmental or non-governmental agencies.



A great number of artists still live in relative poverty and therefore should be funded by governmental or non-governmental agencies.



A great number of artists still live in relative poverty and should therefore be funded by governmental or non-governmental agencies.

hence

Hence is a formal word meaning *that is the reason for ... or that explains ...*

- Many websites contain offensive material, hence the need for parents to monitor their children's online activity.
- Crime is increasing in many cities worldwide, hence the importance of having more police on the streets.

thus

Thus is a formal expression meaning *with this result ...*

- Deforestation is spreading far and wide across the globe, thus threatening an increasing number of plant and animal species.
- Every year, tons of plastic find their way into the sea. Thus, water pollution has become a crucial environmental issue that should be tackled without delay.

for this reason

- The internet, and social media in particular, can be highly addictive. For this reason, some schools prohibit the use of smartphones on their premises.
- In my opinion, all children have an urge to be creative in one way or another and, for this reason, should be given the opportunity to attend art and craft classes.

If you give more than one reason, remember to use the plural form:

- In overcrowded prisons, inmates often meet dangerous criminals and have few opportunities to embark on a rehabilitation programme. For these reasons, they are often driven to recidivism.

NB: *recidivism* means the act of re-offending even after having served a prison sentence.

7. Expressing Purpose

IELTS Liz

Below you will find a variety of connectors that you can use to introduce purpose in your essay.

to / in order to / so as to / so that

to

The most common way to express purpose is *to* (+ Verb).

- Throughout history, humans have killed animals to survive.
- Smart children can search the internet to acquire new knowledge.

in order to / so as to

These are more formal expressions of purpose than *to*. The meaning is the same.

- Throughout history, humans have killed animals in order to survive.



Throughout history, humans have killed animals so as to survive.

- Smart children can search the internet in order to acquire new knowledge.



Smart children can search the internet so as to acquire new knowledge.

The order of the clauses can be changed. If the purpose clause comes first, you need a comma to separate the clauses.

- In order to acquire new knowledge, smart children can search the internet.

Note that when you have a negative infinitive, you cannot use *to* on its own.

You need to use *in order not to* or *so as not to*.

- In order not to endanger future generations, we should stop depleting our natural resources and polluting our environment.



So as not to endanger future generations, we should stop depleting our natural resources and polluting our environment.

- Consumers have to enquire about the companies whose products they buy in order not to be accomplices in possible human rights violations.



Consumers have to enquire about the companies whose products they buy so as not to be accomplices in possible human rights violations.

so that

We can also use *so that* to express purpose. This linker is often used with a modal in the purpose clause (*can / cannot, could / could not, may / might, will / will not, would / would not*).

- University students like to do an internship so that they can find a better job later on.
- In many countries, women fought for universal suffrage so that we might all live in a fairer society.

It is also used in negative clauses of purpose:

- Some school leavers choose to work for one or two years and put money aside so that they will not need to borrow when they go to university.

Finally, we also use *so that* when the subject of the main clause is different from the subject in the purpose clause:

- Many people emigrate so that their children can have a better education and a better life more generally.
- Some cities have introduced a public bike share scheme so that more people might start to commute by bike.

8. Conditional Statements

See Conditional Statements, page 113.

9. Adding Information

The body paragraphs of your essay will contain a main idea with supporting points. For this reason, you will need to use a range of linking words to signpost that you are adding additional information. As you can see, there is a range of linking words that can be used and therefore you should never repeat them. When you proofread your essay, look for any of the following linking words that you have repeated and replace them with alternatives. Always make sure that the information you are adding does support the main idea of the body paragraph.

*not only ... but also / and / in addition, / moreover, /
furthermore, / besides, / as well as / also*

not only ... but also

If you want to introduce an idea that adds to something you have already written, you can use *not only ... but also*.

Note that no commas are used in these sentences.

- Historical buildings are important not only as tourist attractions but also as symbols of national pride.
- Discouraging car ownership by increasing tax will not only solve traffic problems but also reduce air pollution.
- Increasing world temperatures can cause not only rising sea levels but also extreme weather patterns.

Note also that the words following *not only* and *but also* have to belong to the same part of speech / the same type of phrase.

Incorrect: Developing tourism will not only boost local economies but also job opportunities will increase. (*not only* + Verb vs *but also* + Noun Phrase)

Correct: Developing tourism will not only boost local economies but also increase job opportunities. (*not only* + Verb and *but also* + Verb)

and

It is alright to use this linking word in an IELTS essay. However, it should NEVER be used at the start of a sentence in IELTS Writing Task 2.

Below are examples of INCORRECT and CORRECT sentences using this common linking word:

Incorrect: University education abroad in a developed country can offer a better standard of education. And it will give those graduates an advantage in the job market.

Correct: University education abroad in a developed country can offer a better standard of education and will give those graduates an advantage in the job market.

in addition / moreover / furthermore / besides

Using *and* to join two long sentences may result in an overlong sentence. In such cases, it is better to have two sentences and start the second one with *In addition*, *Moreover*, *Furthermore* or *Besides*. All these words are interchangeable.

- University education abroad in a developed country can offer a better standard of education. In addition, it will give those graduates an advantage in the job market.



University education abroad in a developed country can offer a better standard of education. Moreover, it will give those graduates an advantage in the job market

- Social media have radically changed the way people communicate with each other. Furthermore, they have also negatively affected local communities as people spend more time online.



Social media have radically changed the way people communicate with each other. Besides, they have also negatively affected local communities as people spend more time online.

as well as ... also

This connector is also used to add relevant information. However, it requires a different structure from the connectors in the preceding paragraph.

- As well as offering a better standard of education, university studies abroad in a developed country will also give graduates an advantage in the job market.
- As well as radically changing the way people communicate with each other, social media have also negatively affected local communities as people spend more time online.

10. Showing Similarities & Differences

Similarities

similarly / likewise

These two sentence adverbs mean the same and require the same structure. In the following examples, they are fully interchangeable.

- The air we breathe and the seas contain an increasing amount of poisonous substances. Similarly, the food we eat often reveals traces of chemical additives and preservatives.
- Credit cards encourage people to overspend. Likewise, advertising entices them to spend indiscriminately.

Differences

instead, / on the contrary, / in contrast, / rather,

These four linkers differ slightly in meaning and are therefore not interchangeable. However, they all usually appear in initial position and are followed by a comma.

instead

- Prisons rarely give inmates opportunities to integrate back into society. Instead, they gradually turn them into outcasts.

on the contrary

- I do not believe that disciplining students in front of others is effective in the long run. On the contrary, such harsh treatment only humiliates the recipient and risks alienating them completely.

in contrast

- Only a few decades ago, teenagers used to play outdoors a lot. In contrast, adolescents today seem to spend most of their leisure time indoors surfing the internet or chatting online.

rather

- Sadly, many schools do not even try to enable children to develop free and enquiring minds. Rather, they teach young people how to conform and become docile members of society.

11. Adding Emphasis

indeed

You generally use *indeed* to introduce a comment that strengthens a point you have just made.

- School uniforms do not allow students to express themselves. Indeed, having to wear a uniform encourages conformity.

in fact

You generally use *in fact* to introduce a comment that contradicts or modifies a point you have just made.

- Science and maths are sometimes thought of as 'boys' subjects'. In fact, girls usually do as well as, or even outperform, boys in science classwork.

12. Complex Prepositions

Although complex prepositions are not strictly speaking 'linking words', we are presenting them in this chapter because most of them are used to highlight the relationship between various pieces of information and language.

Such complex prepositions are relatively frequently used in academic writing.

In the same way as ordinary prepositions, these prepositions come before a noun or noun phrase.

As you know, many prepositions consist of a single word (*at / for / in*, etc.). By contrast, complex prepositions (also known as 'compound prepositions') are combinations of two, three or four words functioning as a single unit (*according to / apart from / instead of*, etc.).

The table below shows a selection of complex prepositions which are commonly used in academic writing.

according to	in addition to	regardless of
apart from	in conjunction with	with regard to
contrary to	in connection with	with respect to
except for	in terms of	with the exception of
	instead of	

A good learner's dictionary should explain the meaning of all complex prepositions and provide at least one example sentence to illustrate their meaning.

according to

This complex preposition has three different meanings. We list them here in order of frequency.

1. You use *according to* (+ a particular source of information) to tell the reader or listener where you got the information from. However, please also note that while it is useful to learn this for general English use, IELTS do not require you to state your source of information or data in your Writing Task 2 essay. It does not increase your score to state sources of information or use such language.

- According to a leading expert, the world economy will soon be going into recession.
- Our standard of living is rising, according to official statistics.
- Global warming, according to several United Nations reports, is threatening our ecosystems.

Note how the place of the prepositional phrase (initial, middle, or final) affects punctuation.

Warning:

Never say ~~*according to me*~~ / ~~*according to my opinion*~~ / ~~*according to my point of view*~~. These expressions are INCORRECT. Say: *in my opinion*.

2. The preposition *according to* is also used to mean 'in a way that agrees with a particular plan, system, or set of rules'. This is a useful expression for your IELTS essays.

- Grouping students according to their ability has both advantages and disadvantages.
- All sportspeople know that any game has to be played according to the rules.

3. Finally, *according to* can be used to mean 'in a way that depends on a changing factor'.

- In my opinion, it can be unfair to pay workers according to the amount of work they do.
- In some countries, employers hire and dismiss workers according to the fluctuations in demand for the goods or services they provide.

apart from

This complex preposition has two different meanings.

1. You use *apart from* to mean 'except for', 'not taking into account'.

- Apart from the frequent lack of educational resources, teaching in rural areas can be an exciting job.
- In my opinion, no twentieth-century statesman deserves to be called a hero, apart from Nelson Mandela.

2) You can also use *apart from* in a similar sense to 'in addition to'.

- Deforestation often causes erosion and flooding. Apart from that, it is also partly responsible for an increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.
- Apart from strengthening family ties, playing sports with your children is also good for your health.

contrary to

You use *contrary to* to emphasise that something is true although other people believe the opposite. This is a good way to present your own view in comparison to other people's opinions that you might not agree with.

- Contrary to what many people think, meat does not have to be part of a healthy diet.

This preposition is often used in the phrase *contrary to popular belief/opinion/perception*.

- Contrary to popular belief, not all food additives are purely chemical.

except for / with the exception of

This preposition has a similar meaning to *apart from* in the sense of 'not taking into account'. In formal writing, *with the exception of* is used more often than *except for*.

- Except for surgery, medicine has not made much progress over the last century.
↓
With the exception of surgery, medicine has not made much progress over the last century.

in addition to

This is a useful way to put additional information into your sentence.

- Cities attract a lot of people because, in addition to better public services, they also offer good shopping facilities and diverse places of entertainment.

in conjunction with

This is a formal expression basically meaning 'together with'. This is commonly used with essays that focus on solutions to problems.

- A ban on poaching, in conjunction with a clean-up of forests and rivers, would save many endangered species.

instead of

- More people should take public transport instead of driving to work.

In this sentence, the writer wants to say that many people drive to work, but that using public transport would be a better choice.

- In the future, I believe everyone will use electric vehicles instead of traditional cars.

Now people are using traditional cars, but the writer believes that in the future they will choose electric ones.

regardless of

- Everyone in society, regardless of gender, should have the right to live without fear of violence or abuse.

This means that the right to live without fear of violence or abuse should not be affected or influenced by the gender of the person. In other words, gender should not be taken into consideration when we talk about the right to live without fear of violence or abuse.

- Regardless of their citizens' concerns for the future, many governments continue to invest in fossil fuels.

This means that many governments are not affected or influenced by their citizens' concerns for the future, and continue to invest in fossil fuels

with regard to / with respect to / regarding; concerning / in connection with

In the rest of this section, we will focus mainly on a group of expressions which are all closely related to the meaning of *about*.

- Neither economists nor politicians seem able to understand the challenges with regard to climate change and loss of biodiversity.



Neither economists nor politicians seem able to understand the challenges with respect to climate change and loss of biodiversity.



Neither economists nor politicians seem able to understand the challenges regarding climate change and loss of biodiversity.



Neither economists nor politicians seem able to understand the challenges concerning climate change and loss of biodiversity.



Neither economists nor politicians seem able to understand the challenges in connection with climate change and loss of biodiversity.

As these paraphrases illustrate, *with regard to / with respect to / regarding / concerning / in connection with* are all expressions which share the core meaning of 'about'.

These expressions are often (though not always) interchangeable. In the following sentences, for example, any of these five prepositions could be used:

- Even developed countries sometimes fail to take all necessary measures to protect their citizens' health. With regard to air pollution, for example, several of them do not respect international air quality standards.
- With respect to youth unemployment, some economists have suggested that encouraging self-employment and innovation could provide a solution.
- Regarding road congestion in cities, an obvious solution would seem to be the improvement of the public transportation system.
- It is hard to remain indifferent about the lack of progress governments are making concerning the eradication of poverty.

as regards / as far as ... is (are) concerned

These two expressions are also related to the meaning of *about*. Although they are generally considered less formal than the four complex prepositions discussed in the preceding paragraph, it is alright to use them in IELTS Writing Task 2. What matters is that you show flexibility and do not overuse any single one of them.

- It is hard to remain indifferent about the lack of progress governments are making as regards the eradication of poverty.
- It is hard to remain indifferent about the lack of progress governments are making as far as the eradication of poverty is concerned.
- Neither economists nor politicians seem able to understand the challenges ahead as regards climate change and loss of biodiversity.
- Neither economists nor politicians seem able to understand the challenges ahead as far as climate change and loss of biodiversity are concerned.

Note that *as regards* always takes an -s at the end, even when the noun that follows is plural.

Warning:

There are a number of other similar expressions related to the meaning of *about* which, although acceptable in spoken English, should not be used in an essay: *Speaking of ... / As for ... / Talking about ... / About ...*

in terms of (+ Noun) / in (+ Adjective +) terms

These expressions are also related in meaning to *about* and are often interchangeable with *regarding* or *with regard to*. You use them to specify which aspect of a subject you are considering or from what point of view you are looking at it.

- In terms of money, working as a teacher does not really seem attractive.
↓
In financial terms, working as a teacher does not really seem attractive.
- It seems fair to say that a lot has changed for the better for women in terms of politics.
- For a long time, English-speaking countries played a dominant role in the world in political terms.

13. Giving Examples

See page 229.

See Workbook Exercises page 6.

Relative Clauses

Difference between Defining and Non-Defining Relative Clauses

It is likely you might use both defining and non-defining relative clauses in your IELTS Writing Task 2 essay. Defining and non-defining clauses differ in a number of ways. Defining relative clauses define, or 'identify', the noun they relate to; they provide essential information. Non-defining clauses, by contrast, only give additional information. They also have different punctuation.

Consider these two sentences:

- A. Doctors who often work long hours are more likely to suffer from burnout.
- B. Doctors, who often work long hours, are essential to the future of a country.

A) Defining

In Sentence A, the underlined relative clause gives essential information about the subject. It tells you *which doctors* are more likely to suffer from burnout. It shows that only the doctors who work long hours are likely to get burnout.

If we remove the clause "who often work long hours", the whole meaning of the sentence changes: "Doctors are more likely to suffer from burnout." Now the sentence implies that all doctors might get burnout. From this we can see that the defining relative clause is essential to the sentence.

- The underlined clause in Sentence A is therefore called a **defining relative clause**.
- **Punctuation:** It requires no comma(s).

B) Non-Defining

In Sentence B, by contrast, the underlined relative clause only adds *extra information* and is not actually vital to the meaning in the sentence. The sentence is about doctors being essential to the future of the country. It refers to all doctors. The clause "who often work long hours" is only extra information and does not affect the subject (*doctors*) at all.

If we remove the clause "who often work long hours", the meaning of the sentence would still be the same: "Doctors are essential to the future of a country."

We use these types of clauses to add information for interest and not for necessity.

- The underlined clause in Sentence B is therefore called a ***non-defining* relative clause**.
- **Punctuation:** It requires a comma before and after it.

Defining Relative Clauses

In defining relative clauses, *who*, *which* and *that* can be either the subject or the object of the verb in the relative clause.

A) When *who*, *which* or *that* is the Subject of the Verb

1. Children **who** watch TV for long hours every day are likely to develop concentration problems.
2. There are a number of measures **which** should be implemented to deal with criminal reoffenders.


Before we look at the function of *who/which/that*, let's explain once again the meaning of "**defining** relative clause".

If we look at Sentence 1, it is clear that the writer is talking about a *specific* group of children and not about *all* children. It is not the case that all children are likely to develop concentration problems, only some of them.

The question is: 'Which children are likely to develop concentration problems?' ... and the answer is in the relative clause: 'Those who watch TV for long hours every day.'


We can see that the relative clause **defines** which children we are talking about; it defines the subject.

The word *children* is the subject and *who* relates to this subject.

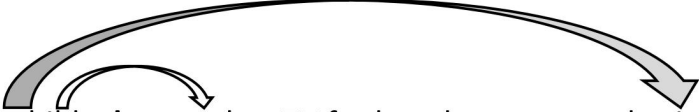

Children **who** watch TV for long hours every day are likely to develop concentration problems.

When you write defining relative clauses, always pay attention to **subject–verb agreement**.

As you can see from the examples below, the form of the verb in both the main clause and the relative clause is determined by the subject.



Children **who** watch TV for long hours every day are likely to develop concentration problems.



A child **who** watches TV for long hours every day is likely to develop concentration problems.

In this case, *who* (or *which* and *that*) cannot be omitted. You must have them in your sentence.

It is common to use this type of defining relative clause in your IELTS Writing Task 2 essay. You should practise using it to ensure your defining relative clause is produced accurately in your test.

Note:

In Sentence 2, *that* can be used instead of *which* as shown below. Both versions are equally acceptable in essay writing.

(In spoken English, *that* can also be used instead of *who* in defining relative clauses. However, do not do this in your essay. Always use *who* for people in writing.)

There are a number of measures **which** should be implemented to deal with criminal reoffenders.



There are a number of measures **that** should be implemented to deal with criminal reoffenders.

Important: NEVER use *which* for a person.

B) When *who*, *which* or *that* is the Object of the Verb in the Relative Clause

3. We have to be sure we have the qualities needed to be successful in the career **which** we have chosen.

We can see that in Sentence 3, the word *which* relates to the word *career* (the object of the verb). The clause word *which* can be replaced by *that*.

We have to be sure we have the qualities needed to be successful in the career which we have chosen.



We have to be sure we have the qualities needed to be successful in the career that we have chosen.



We have to be sure we have the qualities needed to be successful in the career we have chosen.

In the final sentence above, *which* (or *that*) can be omitted. It is possible to remove them from the sentence. However, if you feel uncertain about doing this, it is best to use them in order to avoid possible errors.

Sentence 4 below is another example where the relative pronoun is the object of the verb in the defining relative clause.

4. The teachers who we remember best are the enthusiastic and dedicated ones.



The teachers we remember best are the enthusiastic and dedicated ones.

We can see that the word *who* relates to *the teachers*. If we rewrite the sentence as '*We remember best the teachers who are enthusiastic and dedicated*,' we can see clearly that '*the teachers who ...*' is the object of the verb '*remember*'.

Notes:

- Here too, always pay attention to **subject–verb agreement**. As you can see from the examples below, the form of the verb in both the main clause and the relative clause is determined by the subject.

The teachers who we remember best are the enthusiastic and dedicated ones.

(Main clause: third person plural verb *are* because the subject is *the teachers*, a plural noun. Relative clause: plural verb *remember* because the subject is *people*, a plural noun.)

The teacher who I remember best is the enthusiastic and dedicated one.

(Main clause: third person singular verb *is* because the subject is *the teacher*, a singular noun. Relative clause: first person singular verb *remember* because the subject is *I*, the first person singular pronoun.)

The teachers he remembers best are the enthusiastic and dedicated ones.

(Main clause: third person plural verb *are* because the subject is *the teachers*, a plural noun. Relative clause: third person singular verb *remembers* because the subject is *he*, a third person singular pronoun.)

In Sentence 4, *who* can be left out. However, if you feel uncertain about doing this, it is best to use the word *who* in order to avoid errors.

When *who* is the object of the verb in the relative clause, *whom* is sometimes used instead, especially in formal written English.

The teachers who we remember best are the enthusiastic and dedicated ones.

↓

The teachers whom we remember best are the enthusiastic and dedicated ones.

C) Defining Relative Clauses with *whose*

The relative pronoun *whose* is a possessive and can stand for *his*, *her* or *their*. It is used mostly for people.

5. A father **whose** work takes him away from his children will often have bitter regrets later in life.

This could be paraphrased as *"A father will often have bitter regrets later in life if **his** work takes him away from his children."*

6. Marie Curie was a scientist **whose** work was crucial in developing the use of X-rays in medicine.

This could be paraphrased as *"Marie Curie was a scientist. **Her** work was crucial in developing the use of X-rays in medicine."*

7. Parents **whose** children only play computer games should encourage them to be more physically active.

This could be paraphrased as *"Parents should encourage their children to be more physically active. This is especially the case if **their** children only play computer games."*

D) Defining Relative Clauses with Prepositions

The preposition comes at the end of the relative clause. In formal written English, the preposition can also come just before the relative pronoun. Both structures are equally acceptable in essay writing.

8. The strangers **whom** teenagers chat online **with** are not always trustworthy.



The strangers **with whom** teenagers chat online are not always trustworthy.

Note:

In an informal style, when the preposition comes at the end, *who* can be used instead of *whom*: *'The strangers who teenagers chat online with are not always trustworthy.'*

However, if the preposition comes before the relative pronoun, the form *whom* must always be used.

To simplify things, in essay writing always use the form *whom* in clauses with a preposition.

9. Politicians seem to ignore the issues **which** young people feel most passionate **about**.



Politicians seem to ignore the issues **about which** young people feel most passionate.

It is common to use defining relative clauses in IELTS Writing Task 2. However, you need to be aware of your own limitations. If your grammar is not strong at all, you might want to avoid using relative clauses. If your grammar is at intermediate level, you might want to use some relative clauses while avoiding the more complex ones.

At all times, you must only use the grammar features that you are comfortable with and that you know you can produce with accuracy. There is no point using clauses and producing errors at the same time.

Hopefully, from the list above you will see which ones you feel most comfortable using.

Non-Defining Relative Clauses

As you may remember from the start of this chapter, a non-defining clause is not vital to the meaning of a sentence. It is a clause which adds extra information. The clause can safely be omitted without changing the meaning of the main sentence. This can be useful in IELTS Writing Task 2.

Example:

- English may cause certain minority languages to disappear.

We may wish to add extra information to this about English; for example, we could add that English is now the main global language.

- English may cause certain minority languages to disappear. English is now the main global language.

The second sentence is additional information that is not necessary to add. We add it because it adds an interesting point about the English language. Therefore, we can insert that additional information as a non-defining clause:

- English, **which** is now the main global language, may cause certain minority languages to disappear.

Note that the subject in both sentences is the same: *English*. Also notice that the non-defining clause must be between commas.

A) When *which* or *who* are the Subject

We have just seen in our first example that *which* relates to the subject of the clause.

1. English, **which** is now the main global language, may cause certain minority languages to disappear.

Below are some more examples:

2. Online social media, **which** are becoming increasingly common, can bring people together across vast geographical distances.
3. Budget holidays, **which** are becoming increasingly cheaper, are resulting in more people travelling by air and thus adding to the problem of air pollution.
4. A student from a more modest background, **who** often has to work and study at the same time, sometimes feels less integrated into campus life than their peers.
5. Students from more modest backgrounds, **who** often have to work and study at the same time, sometimes feel less integrated into campus life than their peers.

In Sentences 1–5, *who* and *which* are the **subject** of the verb in the relative clause. They cannot be omitted or replaced by another word. This means you cannot use *that* instead of *which*. You cannot use *whom* instead of *who*.

Also notice **subject–verb agreement**: singular subject – singular verb in Sentences 1 and 4; plural subject – plural verb in Sentences 2, 3 and 5.

B) When *which* or *who* are the Object

6. Ex-convicts, whom society tends to push aside, mostly want to return to normal life.

7. Practical industry experience, which many students try to gain while at university, is highly valued by employers.

In Sentences 6 and 7, *whom* and *which* are the **object** of the verb in the relative clause. They cannot be omitted or replaced by another word. This means it is not possible to use *who* in Sentence 6 instead of whom and you cannot use *that* in Sentence 7 instead of which.

Let's look at how Sentence 6 is created. Sentence 6 is made of two sentences, as shown below. You can see that the two sentences begin with different subjects. In the first sentence the subject is *ex-convicts* and in the second sentence the subject is *society*.

Ex-convicts mostly want to return to normal life. **Society** tends to push them aside.

The word *them* in the second sentence is the object of the verb in that sentence. It refers to ex-convicts.

Ex-convicts mostly want to return to normal life. Society tends to push **them** aside.




Below we can see that it is possible to add the information in the second sentence as a non-defining relative clause to the main sentence. It is non-defining because it only provides additional information.

Ex-convicts ... mostly want to return to normal life. Society tends to push them aside.



As you can see below, the word *whom* in the non-defining clause relates to the word *them*, which we must now delete.

Ex-convicts, whom society tends to push ~~them~~ aside, mostly want to return to normal life.





Ex-convicts, **whom** society tends to push aside, mostly want to return to normal life.

This means the word *whom* in the non-defining clause relates to the object in the clause. When we use a non-defining relative clause, we will use *whom* instead of *who* if it relates to the object.

Let's now look more closely at how Sentence 7 is created. We can add the extra information given in the second sentence as a non-defining clause. Again, you can see that the two sentences have different subjects: *practical industry experience* and *many students*.

Practical industry experience ... is highly valued by employers. Many students try to gain practical industry experience while at university.



Practical industry experience, **which** many students try to gain while at university, is highly valued by employers.

As you can see above, we have inserted the second sentence as a clause. We have used the word *which* to refer to *practical industry experience* (the object of the clause). It is important to note that we cannot use *that*. We must use *which* when it refers to the object in a non-defining relative clause.

C) Non-Defining Relative Clauses with *whose*

It is also possible to use *whose* in a non-defining relative clause. We use *whose* to refer to something that belongs or is related to the subject of the main clause. See Sentences 8 and 9 below.


8. Marie Curie, whose work on radioactivity was pioneering, was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize.

9. Firefighters, coastguards and doctors, whose mission is to save human lives, should definitely earn more than pop stars and footballers.

In Sentences 8 and 9, *whose* cannot be omitted or replaced by another word. Let's see how to create Sentences 8 and 9 by combining two sentences.

Sentence 8:

Marie Curie was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize. Her work on radioactivity was pioneering.




Marie Curie ... was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize. Her work on radioactivity was pioneering.

Marie Curie, whose work on radioactivity was pioneering, was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize.

Sentence 9:

Firefighters, coastguards and doctors ... should definitely earn more than pop stars and footballers. Their mission is to save human lives.



Firefighters, coastguards and doctors, whose mission is to save human lives, should definitely earn more than pop stars and footballers.

D) Non-Defining Relative Clauses with Prepositions

The preposition comes at the end of the relative clause. In formal written English, the preposition often comes just before the relative pronoun. Both structures are equally acceptable in essay writing.

10. Tropical rainforests, **which** the future of the planet partly depends **on**, are being destroyed by commercial logging.



Tropical rainforests, **on which** the future of the planet partly depends, are being destroyed by commercial logging.

11. People such as doctors and teachers, **whom** society could not function properly **without**, are very often underpaid.



People such as doctors and teachers, **without whom** society could not function properly, are very often underpaid.

E) Non-Defining Clauses Using *which* to Refer to a Whole Sentence

In all our examples so far, *which* was used to refer to the noun before it. Very often, particularly in written English, *which* can also be used to refer to the whole sentence before it.

12. Plastic bags are rarely disposed of properly, **which** causes them to end up in rivers and lakes.

In Sentence 12, *which* does not relate to the word *bags* but to the whole sentence before it. We can see that the subject of *causes* cannot be the plural noun *bags*. The subject of *causes* is the singular noun phrase 'the fact that plastic bags are rarely disposed of properly'.

Sentence 12 could be paraphrased as:

The fact that plastic bags are rarely disposed of properly causes them to end up in rivers and lakes.

or

Plastic bags are rarely disposed of properly. **This** causes them to end up in rivers and lakes.

Frequently Asked Questions about Relative Clauses

Will I get a high score if I use difficult relative clauses?

No. It does not matter which type of clause you use. You will not get a higher band score because you used one type of clause rather than another. Some of the examples above are easier to produce than others. For this reason, always choose to use structures in your essay that are within your language ability and within your comfort zone. As I repeatedly say throughout this book, your aim is to avoid errors while showing a range of grammar features.

Is punctuation important?

Yes. It is very important to remember the use of commas. A defining relative clause does not use a comma or commas. A non-defining relative clause must have a comma before the relative pronoun, and another comma at the end of the relative clause if the sentence continues after the clause.

Can defining or non-defining clauses also use *when* or *where*?

Yes. These words can be used in both defining and non-defining relative clauses.

Consider these examples:

- Most people remember the day **when** they received their first wages. (*defining*)
- Many artists and scientists fled to the United States in the 1930s, **when** Europe was about to be engulfed in a terrible war. (*non-defining*)
- Tourists usually like visiting the houses **where** famous people were born. (*defining*)
- More and more Western university graduates now go to China, **where** employment opportunities are often better. (*non-defining*)

See Workbook Exercises page 10.

Word Order

The aim of this chapter is to present word order in a simple way so that you can see the patterns and reproduce them to form both simple and complex sentences more accurately.

In this chapter, you will learn:

1.	Basic Word Order Overview
2.	Word Order in Simple Sentences
3.	Word Order in Sentences with Expanded Noun Phrases and Additional Information
4.	Word Order in Complex Sentences
5.	Word Order & Verbs with Two Objects (S+ V + IO + DO)
6.	Word Order in Indirect Questions
7.	Order of Adverbs
8.	Order of Adjectives
9.	Position of Prepositions
10.	Word Order in Passive Sentences

1. Basic Word Order Overview

The basic patterns of word order in statements are:

Subject + Verb + Object

In this pattern, the verb is called 'transitive', i.e. it requires a direct object:

- Many children play computer games.

Subject + Verb

In this pattern, the verb is called 'intransitive', i.e. it does not take an object:

- Traditional cultures are disappearing.

Subject + Verb + Complement

In this pattern, the verb is called a 'link verb' (e.g. *be*, *become*, *get*, *seem*, etc.):

- Many children become obese.

The complement of a link verb is an adjective or a noun that comes after the verb and describes or identifies the subject.

The complement is an essential part of the sentence. The sentence no longer makes sense if the complement is removed.

Some verbs can have a complement after their object, for example:

- Air pollution makes people sick.

In this sentence, *sick* is the object complement.

Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object

- Most parents give their children the best possible education.

Subject + Verb + Object + Complement

- Technology makes the world a better place.

Besides, additional information can be added to each of these patterns, for example:

- Many children play computer games all day.
- Traditional cultures are disappearing fast.
- Many children become obese because of fast food.
- All over the world, traditional cultures are disappearing.
- Technology makes the world a better place for everyone.

In this chapter, we will illustrate and analyse these basic patterns, and also look at how words may be grouped in different ways in more complex sentences.

2. Word Order in Simple Sentences

- Many children play computer games.

Subject:	Many children
Verb:	Play
Object:	computer games.

- People ought to prioritise family.

Subject:	People	
Verb:	ought to prioritise	Modal + Verb
Object:	family.	

- People can earn money.

Subject:	People	
Verb:	can earn	Modal + Verb
Object:	money.	

3. Word Order in Sentences with Expanded Noun Phrases and Additional Information

Below you will see that it is possible to keep the same simple word order but showcase your English by using other grammar features such as an expanded noun phrase or additional information. In IELTS, the sentences below are no longer considered “simple” because they have slightly more complex grammar features.

- Showbiz and sports celebrities are a source of national pride.

Subject:	Showbiz and sports celebrities	Noun Phrase
Verb:	are	
Object:	a source of national pride.	Noun Phrase

- Having a sedentary lifestyle can cause lower back problems in many cases.

Subject:	Having a sedentary lifestyle	Gerund Phrase
Verb:	can cause	
Object:	lower back problems	Noun Phrase
Additional Information:	in many cases.	

- Working from home can blur the boundaries between our private and professional lives.

Subject:	Working from home	Gerund Phrase
Verb:	can blur	Modal + Verb
Object:	the boundaries between our private and professional lives.	Noun Phrase

- Meeting strangers online can lead to dangerous situations, particularly for children.

Subject:	Meeting strangers online	Gerund Phrase
Verb:	can lead to	Modal + Verb + Preposition
Object:	dangerous situations,	
Additional Information:	particularly for children.	

For more information about noun phrases, go to page 20.

4. Word Order in Complex Sentences

Let's look at the word order when two clauses are joined by a conjunction or connected with other linking words. The word order is quite easy to follow, which means you should be able to create these sentences quite easily and with a good degree of accuracy if you practise.

The examples listed below illustrate various types of complex sentences. It is in no way a complete list, but just a few illustrations to help you become familiar with different types of word order so that you can pay attention to this in other chapters.

We should prioritise family when we are at home.

Clause 1	Subject:	We	
	Verb:	should prioritise	Modal + Verb
	Object:	family	
Clause 2	Linking Word:	when	
	Subject:	we	
	Verb:	are	
	Complement:	at home.	

➤ When people do dangerous work, they should be given a higher salary.

Clause 1	Linking Word:	When	
	Subject:	people	
	Verb:	do	
	Object:	dangerous work,	
Clause 2	Subject:	they	
	Verb:	should be given	Modal + [Passive] Verb
	Object:	a higher salary.	

- People do not become murderers just because they watch violent films on TV.

Clause 1	Subject:	People	
	Verb:	do not become	<i>do</i> -Auxiliary + [negative] + Verb
	Complement:	murderers	
Clause 2	Linking Word:	just because	
	Subject:	they	
	Verb:	watch	
	Object:	violent films on TV.	Noun Phrase

The sentence above could be paraphrased as follows:

- Watching violent films on TV is not the only reason why some people become murderers.

Subject:	Watching violent films on TV	Gerund Phrase	
Verb:	is not	<i>be</i> + [negative]	
Complement:	the only reason	why	some people become murderers.
	Noun +	Relative Pronoun +	Clause (Subject + Verb + Complement)

The five examples that follow all contain contrast clauses. They highlight the similarities and the differences in usage between *although*, *even though*, *despite* and *in spite of*.

- Although people care about the environment, they forget to recycle plastics at home.

	Linking Word:	Although	
--	---------------	----------	--

Contrast clause	Subject:	people	
	Verb:	care about	Verb + Preposition
	Object:	the environment,	
Main clause	Subject:	they	
	Verb:	forget	
	Object:	to recycle plastics at home.	<i>to</i> -Infinitive + Object Noun + Additional Information

- Many school children play computer games in their free time even though their parents do not like it.

Main clause	Subject:	Many school children	
	Verb:	play	
	Object:	computer games	
	Additional Information:	in their free time	
Contrast clause	Linking Word:	even though	
	Subject:	their parents	
	Verb:	do not like	<i>do</i> -Auxiliary + [negative] + Verb
	Object:	it.	

Note: In the sentence above, *it* refers to the situation of children playing computer games in their free time.

- Even though people have been told about the risks, they still share their personal information on social media.

	Linking Word:	Even though	
--	---------------	-------------	--

Contrast clause	Subject:	people	
	Verb:	have been told about	Present Perfect [Passive] Verb + Preposition
	Object:	the risks,	
Main clause	Subject:	they	
	Verb:	still share	Adverb + Verb
	Object:	their personal information on social media.	Noun Phrase + Additional Information

If you use the linking word *despite*, the word order of the sentence will change. This is the same when using *in spite of* as a linking word. As the sentences below illustrate, both *despite* and *in spite of* can only be followed by a noun or a gerund.

- Despite having a university degree, many graduates are struggling to find work.

If you paraphrase the contrast clause using *although*, you can see that the 'subject' of *having* is *many graduates*:

- Although many graduates have a university degree, they are struggling to find work.

Note:

~~Despite many graduates have a university degree~~ is WRONG and regarded as a serious mistake.

Contrast clause	Linking Word:	Despite	
	Gerund:	having	
	Object:	a university degree,	
Main clause	Subject:	many graduates	

	Verb:	are struggling	Intransitive Verb (i.e. a verb that does not take an object)
	Object:	to find work.	<i>to</i> -Infinitive + Object of the <i>to</i> -Infinitive

- In spite of numerous warnings in the media and from the government, people still enjoy eating junk food.

This sentence could be paraphrased as: *Although there are numerous warnings in the media and from the government, people still enjoy eating junk food.*

Note: ~~In spite of there are numerous warnings~~ is WRONG and regarded as a serious mistake.

Contrast clause	Linking Word:	In spite of	
	Noun:	numerous warnings	
	Additional Information:	in the media and from the government,	
Main clause	Subject:	people	
	Verb:	still enjoy	Adverb + Verb
	Object:	eating junk food.	Gerund Phrase

For more information about expressing contrast, go to Sentence Structures, page 45.

- Parents feeding their children junk food are not thinking about the damaging health impact [that] it can have.

Clause 1	Subject:	Parents feeding their children junk food	Clause
	Verb:	are not thinking about	Present Continuous Verb + Preposition
	Object:	the damaging health impact	
Clause 2	[Relative Pronoun]	[that]	[Optional Relative Pronoun]
	Subject:	it	
	Verb:	can have.	Modal + Verb

- Notes:
- In the sentence above, the subject of *think about* is a whole clause: *'Parents feeding their children junk food'*. This means the same as *'Parents who feed their children junk food'*.
 - The clause word [that] refers back to *'the damaging health impact'*. It is optional in this sentence because it is the object of the relative clause (*'junk food can have a damaging health impact'*). See Relative Clauses on page 70 to learn about more this.
 - In Clause 2, *it* stands for *junk food*.

- If more people engage with nature, we will not have so many environmental problems in the future.

Clause 1	Clause Word:	If	
	Subject:	more people	
	Verb:	engage with	
	Object:	nature,	
Clause 2	Subject:	we	

	Verb:	will not have	<i>will</i> -Auxiliary + [negative] + Verb
	Object:	so many environmental problems	Quantifier + Noun
	Additional Information	in the future.	

Note:

This structure is a First Conditional statement.

See Conditional Statements on page 113 to learn more about this.

- If people donated more money to charities, fewer vulnerable people would suffer from neglect.

Clause 1	Clause Word:	If	
	Subject:	people	
	Verb:	donated	
	Direct Object:	more money	
	Indirect Object:	to charities,	
Clause 2	Subject:	fewer vulnerable people	Noun Phrase
	Verb:	would suffer from	Modal + Verb + Preposition
	Object:	neglect.	

Note:

This structure is a Second Conditional statement.

See Conditional Statements on page 113 to learn more about this.

5. Word Order & Verbs with Two Objects

Many verbs can have both an indirect and a direct object. The usual word order is:

Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object

- A) Most parents give their children the best possible education.
- B) All schools should teach young children a foreign language.

A)

Subject:	Most parents
Verb:	give
Indirect Object:	their children
Direct Object:	the best possible education.

B)

Subject:	All schools
Auxiliary Verb:	should
Verb:	teach
Indirect Object	young children
Direct Object:	a foreign language.

When we look at Sentence A above, we see that it is about *parents* (subject) giving *the best education* (direct object) and the person receiving it is their *children* (indirect object). The direct object is what is being given, not who is receiving it.

In Sentence B, the direct object is *what* is being taught (*a foreign language*), and the indirect object is *who* is being taught (*young children*).

In Sentence C below, you can see the same word order in a more complex sentence.

- C) Large, successful international companies should give their staff generous bonuses at the end of the year.

C)

Subject:	Large, successful international companies	
Verb:	should give	Modal + Verb
Indirect Object:	their staff	

Direct Object:	generous bonuses	
Additional Information:	at the end of the year.	

However, the word order changes if we use a preposition such as *to* with the indirect object. In this case, we put the indirect object at the end.

Subject + Verb + Direct Object + Preposition + Indirect Object

- Most parents give their children the best possible education



Most parents give the best possible education to their children.

Subject:	Most parents	
Verb:	give	
Direct Object:	the best possible education	Noun Phrase
Preposition:	to	
Indirect Object:	their children.	

- All schools should teach young children a foreign language.



All schools should teach a foreign language to young children.

- Large, successful international companies should give generous bonuses to their staff at the end of the year.

Subject:	Large, successful, international companies	Noun Phrase
Verb:	should give	Modal + Verb
Direct Object:	generous bonuses	
Preposition:	to	

Indirect Object:	their staff	
Additional Information:	at the end of the year.	

6. Word Order in Indirect Questions

Although it is not recommended to write questions in your essay, it is useful to look at them in order to understand indirect questions, which can be used.

Direct Questions

As you know, in direct questions the subject comes *after* the auxiliary / verb:

- How could prisons be improved?

Question Word:	How	
Modal:	could	
Subject:	prisons	
Verb:	be improved?	[Passive] Verb

- How did people feel about climate change ten years ago?

Question Word:	How	
do-Auxiliary:	did	
Subject:	people	
Verb:	feel	
Preposition + Object	about climate change	
Additional Information:	ten years ago?	

- Why is fast food so unhealthy?

Question Word:	Why	
Verb:	is	
Subject:	fast food	
Complement:	so unhealthy?	

Indirect Questions

In indirect questions, however, the subject comes *before* the auxiliary / verb:

- Many people wonder how prisons could be improved.

Subject:	Many people	
Verb:	wonder	
Object:	how prisons could be improved.	Clause
	Question Word + Subject + Modal + [Passive] Verb	

- I will now explain in some detail why fast food is so unhealthy.
- We do not really know how people felt about climate change ten years ago.

7. Order of Adverbs

Adverbs and adverbial phrases can come in various positions. There are many rules and exceptions, so only some of the main points can be presented here.

Adverbs of frequency (*always / never / sometimes / often*, etc.) *usually* come before the main verb, but after *be* and auxiliaries:

- Children often neglect their homework because of television and social media.
- Parents should always monitor their children's online activity.

- Senior staff will never accept to have the same salary as those in junior roles.
- Hands-on industry experience is usually an asset when applying for a job.

Adverbs of manner, place and time *usually* go at the end:

- Many of the world's largest cities have not been planned very carefully.
- Teachers shape the future of millions of children all over the world.
- Many people check their mailbox as soon as they get up.

If those adverbs occur together, the *usual* order is (1) manner, (2) place, (3) time:

- Unemployment has risen dramatically in many countries over the past five years.

However, you can change the word order if you want to emphasise the time or the place:

- Over the past five years, unemployment has risen dramatically in many countries.
- In many countries, unemployment has risen dramatically over the past five years.

Note that if you put an adverbial phrase of time or place in initial position, it needs to be followed by a comma.

'Linking adverbs' (*Besides / Secondly / Then / However*, etc.) and 'attitude adverbs' (*Fortunately / Surprisingly / Sadly*, etc.) *usually* go in front position:

- Working from home makes commuting unnecessary. Besides, it enables people to manage their work schedule themselves.
- Numerous environmental organisations and agencies are being set up. Unfortunately, irreparable damage to the environment has already been done, and many plant and animal species have already disappeared.

For a list of linking words that are often used at the beginning of a sentence, go to page 45.

8. Order of Adjectives

Adjectives can have two positions. They can come before a noun (as in *violent films / a noisy city / a potential employer*, etc.) or after a link verb (as in *Video games can be harmful. / The world economic outlook seems uncertain.*, etc.). The former are called "attributive" adjectives, while the latter are "predicative".

Let's now look at both types in some detail.

Attributive adjectives

Sometimes in a noun phrase two or more adjectives are used attributively:

- Sometimes it is hard to find a job even if you have outstanding organisational skills and impressive academic qualifications.

NOT ~~organisational outstanding skills~~ or ~~academic impressive qualifications~~

There is a marked tendency for adjectives expressing an opinion to come first, followed by adjectives expressing facts. Adjectives such as *outstanding / impressive / remarkable / beautiful / excellent / interesting*, etc. express subjective opinions, while adjectives such as *organisational / large / cosmopolitan / ancient*, etc. express facts.

If the attributive adjectives used in the noun phrase are all factual, the order is generally as follows:

1. size / shape
2. age
3. colour
4. nationality
5. material

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However, in IELTS Writing Task 2, you are not very likely to use much descriptive language of this type:

- Despite the rise in burglaries, we do not all need to have a huge old English bulldog to feel safe at home.

As you can see, the order of the adjectives is: size (*huge*) – age (*old*) – nationality (*English*).

Although the essay is argumentative (i.e. not descriptive), there might occasionally be an opportunity to use two or more factual adjectives, in which case the above 'rule' could prove useful:

- Children who grow up in tall concrete blocks of flats do not behave in the same way as village children. [size (*tall*) – material (*concrete*)]
- Small new local businesses suffer from globalisation and need all the support they can get. [size (*small*) – age (*new*) – nationality (by extension, *local*)]

You do not need to make a special effort to try and use such adjective sequences in your essay. Simply be aware of the 'rule' if you find that two or more consecutive adjectives would be appropriate in a particular sentence.

Predicative adjectives

Predicative adjectives are those that appear after a link verb. The main link verbs are the following:

appear	be	become	get	look	seem	sound
--------	----	--------	-----	------	------	-------

- Many things may seem strange when we visit a foreign country for the first time.
- If you have a positive mindset, the future always looks bright.
- I find that the idea of a basic income for everyone sounds reasonable.

Note that it is an adjective that is used after those link verbs, not an adverb. (So NOT ~~seem strangely~~ / ~~looks brightly~~ / ~~sounds reasonably~~!)

9. Order of Prepositions

In indirect questions, relative clauses, passive structures and infinitive structures, we may have a preposition in final position:

- People who suffer from a mental illness need help but often do not know who they could speak to.
- Deep inside, children know what they really enjoy and what they are good at.
- Paparazzi may be a nuisance, but it is a fact that what some celebrities want is just to be looked at.
- People sometimes turn to violence when they have nobody or nothing to believe in.

For more information about the use of prepositions, see pages 204.

10. Word Order in Passive Sentences

Compare these two sentences:

- All governments should address the issue of climate change urgently. (*active*)
- The issue of climate change should be addressed by all governments urgently. (*passive*)

Breaking down these sentences into their components will highlight the transformations that occur when an active sentence is turned into a passive one.

Subject:	All governments	
Verb:	should address	Modal + Verb [Active]
Object:	the issue of climate change	Noun Phrase
Additional Information:	urgently.	

Subject:	The issue of climate change	
Modal + Verb:	should be addressed	Passive
Agent:	by all governments	Noun Phrase
Additional Information:	urgently.	

As the tables make clear, the object of the active sentence becomes the subject of the passive sentence, and the active subject becomes the agent.

For detailed information about the form and the use of the passive voice, see pages 127.

See Workbook Exercises page 13.

End Volume I